

Ozempic and dental therapy

Ozempic (semaglutide) has become a popular medication for many dental patients. Ozempic and other brand name derivatives were initially prescribed by our physician colleagues to treat type 2 diabetes. The glucagon-like peptide-1 (GLP-1) receptor agonists stimulate the release of insulin, which reduces production of glucose in the liver. They also promote weight loss. Several of my patients have informed me of their use of Ozempic specifically for weight loss, and the FDA recently approved 2 drugs in this class (Wegovy and Zepbound) for weight management.

Obesity and type 2 diabetes are serious conditions that must be monitored and treated appropriately. Ozempic and similar drugs such as Rybelsus and Wegovy can help, but prescription medications have many potential adverse effects. Some 9 million prescriptions reportedly were written for weight loss in 2022. I can't imagine what that number is today.

Of course, we should be aware of all medications our patients are taking, but information on oral health implications is limited for these new drugs. For example, there are anecdotal reports that some patients experience dry mouth. As in other conditions, dry mouth may increase the risk of tooth decay and have periodontal effects. Bad breath accompanying dry mouth may be reported.

The implication of these drugs for dental procedures should be evaluated carefully. Use of local anesthetics and posttreatment analgesics might be affected by these medications, which have been reported to delay gastric emptying in some users.¹ GLP-1 receptor agonists lower blood sugar, and intravenous sedation procedures in patients receiving weekly injections of Ozempic may lead to dizziness and potential loss of consciousness, signs of hypoglycemia.

Regarding moderate and deep dental sedation, the literature reports instances of food regurgitation and aspiration resulting from the previously mentioned delays in gastric emptying.¹ Just as some blood thinners are withheld by a

physician prior to surgery, Ozempic and similar drugs may be withheld prior to oral surgery. The principal message here is that communication with our physician colleagues is an important part of diagnosis and dental treatment planning.

It may be time to include this category of advanced medications on our health history forms. Patients need to inform their dentists of prescription medications that may affect their oral health. However, no prescribed medication should be discontinued without direct assessment by the patient's physician. Good oral health is achieved when all parties involved understand the benefits and potential risks of treatment.

The American Society of Anesthesiologists offers guidance on withholding Ozempic and other GLP-1 receptor agonists in patients undergoing elective procedures.¹ The guidance suggests that patients taking Rybelsus (semaglutide), a once-daily pill, withhold the drug on the day of the procedure. Those receiving drugs with weekly dosing (Ozempic, Trulicity, Wegovy, and others) are advised to withhold the medication for 1 week before the procedure.

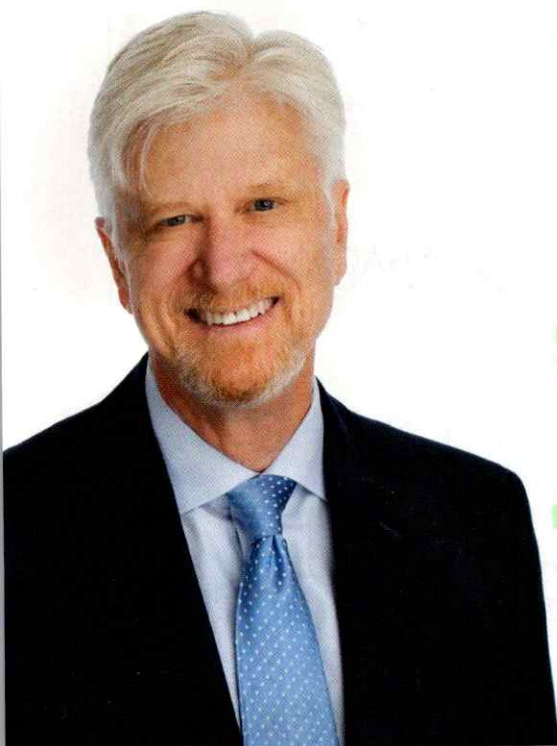
Many medications that promote weight loss, such as Ozempic, are sought by the public and prescribed by physicians. Although dentists are not directly providing drugs of this nature, it is within the scope of our practice to understand their benefits, risks, and implications for oral healthcare. Elevating our knowledge about pharmaceuticals is as important as learning new clinical techniques.



Timothy F. Kosinski, DDS, MAGD
Editor

Reference

1. Joshi GP, Abdelmalak BB, Weigel WA, et al. American Society of Anesthesiologists Consensus-based guidance on preoperative management of patients (adults and children) on glucagon-like peptide-1 (GLP-1) receptor agonists. News release. June 29, 2023. Accessed April 4, 2024. <https://www.asahq.org/about-asa/newsroom/news-releases/2023/06/american-society-of-anesthesiologists-consensus-based-guidance-on-preoperative>



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