

Chapter 18: Medications

One of the big advantages of adopting the low-carb lifestyle is the prospect of reducing the number of one's medications. For me personally, deprescribing, or stopping the medication because the underlying chronic medical problem has resolved, is one of the most satisfying things a physician can do. Before that occurs, part of a comprehensive program to lose weight is to look at what medications a person is taking that may actually be counterproductive. That is, they cause weight gain. These include medications used to treat blood pressure, diabetes, depression, bipolar disorder, seizures, migraine headaches and inflammation. Scrutinize the medicines that you take and ask your provider whether there are alternatives.

- **Antidepressants.**
 - Tricyclic antidepressants. These include amitriptyline, doxepin and imipramine.
 - Selective serotonin reuptake inhibitors (SSRIs). Paroxetine
 - Selective norepinephrine reuptake inhibitors (SSRIs). Venlafaxine
 - Monoamine oxidase inhibitors (MOI's). Isocarboxazide and phenelzine
 - Atypical antidepressants. These include brexpiprazole, mirtazapine and trazodone.
- **Antihistamines.** Diphenhydramine
- **Antipsychotics.** The list is long and includes clozapine, chlorpromazine, brexpiprazole, ilopridone, lithium, quetiapine, risperidone, sertindole, thioridazine, trifluoperazine, and zotepine.

- **Anti-seizure medications.** Medications such as carbamazepine, gabapentin, pregabalin and valproate are examples.
- **Antiviral medications.** This group includes highly active anti-retroviral therapies (HAART) protease inhibitors.
- **Blood pressure (antihypertensive) medications.**
 - **Beta blockers.** Medications such as atenolol, metoprolol and propranolol
 - **Calcium channel blockers.** These medications cause weight gain mainly by causing swelling, especially of the lower extremities and include amlodipine and nifedipine.
- **Chemotherapeutic and anti-inflammatory agents.** These include corticosteroids, aromatase inhibitors, cyclophosphamide, 5-fluorouracil, methotrexate and tamoxifen.
- **Hormones.** Steroids such as glucocorticoids and injectable progestins such as Depo-Provera used for birth control are anabolic, meaning they are growth hormones.
- **Migraine medications.** These medications include amitriptyline, the beta blockers listed above, gabapentin, paroxetine and valproic acid.
- **Mood stabilizers.** Medications most associated with weight gain include carbamazepine, cariprazine, divalproex, gabapentin, lithium, valproate and vigabatrin.

One of the attributes of eating a diet that is higher in fat such as in TCR, is the propensity to decrease appetite. This is because a diet lower in carbohydrates will result in less insulin and other 'hormones of hunger', particularly one named ghrelin. Still, many individuals feel that they need a little help to get started. The following medications are used to assist people in losing weight.

- **Phentermine (Adipex)** is a sympathomimetic amine. Works as an appetite suppressant.
- **Liraglutide** is a glucagon like peptide 1 receptor agonist (GLP-1). It is an injectable medication given to many with diabetes.
- **Naltrexone/bupropion** is a combination of an opioid antagonist and an antidepressant. It is generally not used in those with uncontrolled hypertension, chronic opioid use, seizure disorders and abrupt discontinuation of alcohol, benzodiazepines, barbiturates and antiepileptic drugs.
- **Orlistat** is a gastrointestinal lipase inhibitor. It is given with meals that contain fat. It inhibits the digestion of fats. This explains one of the more troublesome side effects, an oily rectal discharge.
- **Phentermine/topiramate** is a combination of 2 weight loss drugs. Side effects including paresthesias and dysgeusia (altered taste). It is not used in women wishing to become pregnant. Pregnancy tests should be performed monthly while using.
- **Topiramate.** Topiramate is an anti-seizure medication. It is also used to prevent migraine headaches.

Drug	Mechanism of action	Pros	Cons
Adipex (phentermine)	Decrease his appetite		Can increase blood pressure Is a stimulant
Liraglutide			
Naltrexone/bupropion			Oily rectal discharge
Orlistat			
Phentermine/topiramate			
Topiramate			