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Nutritional Priorities to Support GLP-1 Therapy for Obesity

Evidence-based nutrition and lifestyle interventions enhance GLP-1 treatment outcomes for obesity, improving adherence, health gains, and long-term weight maintenance

Washington, D.C. (May 30, 2025) – Four leading organizations in lifestyle medicine, obesity medicine, and nutrition—the American College of Lifestyle Medicine (ACLM), the American Society for Nutrition (ASN), the Obesity Medicine Association (OMA), and The Obesity Society (TOS)—have jointly released a clinical advisory titled **“Nutritional Priorities to Support GLP-1 Therapy for Obesity.”** Published across four peer-reviewed journals, this consensus-based guidance reflects an interdisciplinary collaboration to help clinicians support patients receiving GLP-1 receptor agonists for obesity care with evidence-based nutritional and behavioral strategies.

GLP-1 therapies, including both single and combination agents, have emerged as powerful tools in the management of obesity, demonstrating **average placebo-adjusted weight reductions of 5–18% in clinical trials**, along with improvements in metabolic, functional and cardiovascular outcomes. However, **sustaining these benefits over time and maximizing patient outcomes require comprehensive care that integrates lifestyle intervention—particularly nutrition therapy—into the treatment plan.**

“GLP-1s represent an important advancement in obesity care,” said lead author and advisory chair Dariush Mozaffarian, MD, DrPH, of Tufts University. “But these medications can present challenges, including gastrointestinal side effects, risk of micronutrient deficiencies, muscle and bone loss, poor long-term adherence with subsequent weight regain, and high costs; and, on their own, are not enough. Nutrition therapy and lifestyle support are essential components to address these challenges, help patients maximize and maintain health gains over time, and ensure we are using these drugs wisely, effectively, and without bankrupting the healthcare system.”

The advisory outlines **eight key nutritional priorities** to support patients on GLP-1 medications, emphasizing the importance of (1) patient-centered initiation of therapy, (2) careful baseline nutritional assessment, (3) management of gastrointestinal side effects, (4) personalized, nutrient-dense, minimally processed diets, (5) prevention of micronutrient deficiencies (6) adequate protein intake and strength training to preserve lean mass, (7) leveraging a good diet to maximize weight reduction, and (8) promoting other lifestyle changes around activity, sleep, mental stress, substance use, and social connections to maximize long-term success.

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Recent evidence supports this integrative model. In studies evaluating combined pharmacologic and lifestyle interventions, **patients receiving both GLP-1 therapy and structured nutrition guidance achieved greater weight loss, better adherence, and were more likely to sustain weight loss after discontinuing medication** compared to those receiving pharmacotherapy alone (Jastreboff et al., 2022; Wadden et al., 2023; White et al., 2023; Wilding et al., 2021; Wilding et al., 2022; Wilding et al., 2023).

Despite the known benefits, most individuals prescribed GLP-1s do not currently receive adequate nutritional counseling or behavioral support. This advisory seeks to fill that gap with practical, interdisciplinary guidance for implementation in clinical practice.

While certain considerations—such as GI tolerance and micronutrient balance—are important for clinicians to address, the advisory emphasizes that a **proactive lifestyle-based approach can mitigate risks and optimize outcomes**. With obesity prevalence continuing to rise worldwide, the integration of nutrition therapy into GLP-1-based care offers a scalable strategy to extend the clinical and economic value of these therapies.

The joint advisory is simultaneously published in the following scholarly journals::

- *American Journal of Lifestyle Medicine (ACLM)*
- *The American Journal of Clinical Nutrition (ASN)*
- *Obesity Pillars® (OMA)*
- *Obesity (TOS)*

Clinicians are encouraged to use the advisory's tools and frameworks to help patients translate nutrition guidance into sustainable behaviors, making lifestyle medicine an active ingredient in every “prescription” for obesity care.

References:

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Supporting quotes:

“GLP-1s are transforming the treatment of obesity, with immense potential for weight loss and improving health outcomes,” said Jasdeep Saluja, MD, FRCPC, DipABLM, DipABOM, chair of the American College of Lifestyle Medicine’s GLP-1 Task Force. “This joint advisory offers practical priorities for incorporating nutritional and other lifestyle treatments into GLP-1 therapy to maximize effectiveness, obtain more equitable outcomes, and optimize cost-effectiveness in the real world. As clinicians navigate the shifting care landscape for obesity, we hope this information empowers them to manage potential pitfalls, such as gastrointestinal side effects, nutritional needs, and preserving skeletal and muscular body mass.”

“GLP-1s are reshaping the landscape of obesity treatment, but it’s clear that medication alone is not a complete solution,” stated John E. Courtney, PhD, Chief Executive Officer of the American Society for Nutrition. “This consensus-based guidance highlights the critical role of nutrition in supporting patients on GLP-1 therapy, with clear recommendations for health care providers to optimize outcomes, reduce risks, and fill urgent gaps in care through practical, evidence-informed nutrition strategies.”

“As an obesity specialist grounded in both lifestyle and culinary medicine, I see food not just as fuel, but as a foundational tool in clinical care,” stated Lydia Alexander, MD, DABOM, DABLM, MFOMA, Immediate Past President of the Obesity Medicine Association (OMA). “GLP-1 therapies are powerful, but they’re most effective when paired with intentional, nutrient-dense eating patterns that support metabolic health and long-term success. Nutrition is not an afterthought—it’s a therapeutic partner that helps patients sustain weight loss, preserve lean mass, and translate medication-driven progress into lasting well-being.”

“Medical therapy for obesity and lifestyle changes go hand-in-hand,” stated Marc-Andre Cornier, MD, FTOS, president of The Obesity Society. “This guidance lays a nutrition roadmap to help providers support their patients on sustainable and lasting weight reduction journeys. It underscores the importance of nutrition on quality of life, and is an important contribution to the literature about incorporating lifestyle interventions into obesity care.”

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About the American College of Lifestyle Medicine (ACLM)

The American College of Lifestyle Medicine (ACLM) is the nation’s medical professional society advancing the field of lifestyle medicine as the foundation of a redesigned, value-based and equitable healthcare delivery system, essential to achieving the Quintuple Aim and whole-person health. ACLM represents,

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advocates for, trains, certifies, and equips its members to identify and eradicate the root cause of chronic disease by optimizing modifiable risk factors. ACLM is filling the gaping void of lifestyle medicine in medical education, providing more than 1.2 million hours of lifestyle medicine education to physicians and other health professionals since 2004, while also advancing research, clinical practice and reimbursement strategies.

About the American Society for Nutrition (ASN)

ASN is the preeminent professional organization for nutrition research scientists and clinicians around the world. Founded in 1928, the Society brings together the top nutrition researchers, medical practitioners, policy makers and industry leaders to advance our knowledge and application of nutrition. ASN publishes four peer-reviewed journals and provides education and professional development opportunities to advance nutrition research, practice, and education. Since 2018, ASN has presented NUTRITION, the leading global annual meeting for nutrition professionals. For more information, visit www.nutrition.org.

About the Obesity Medicine Association (OMA)

The Obesity Medicine Association (OMA) is the largest organization of physicians, nurse practitioners, physician associates, and other healthcare providers dedicated to the clinical care of patients with obesity. The OMA equips clinicians to treat obesity as a complex, chronic, relapsing disease through its four-pillar approach which includes comprehensive strategies that integrate nutrition therapy, physical activity, behavioral counseling, and medical interventions. Through evidence-based education, clinical resources, research initiatives, and advocacy, the OMA empowers providers to deliver individualized, compassionate, and effective obesity care.

About The Obesity Society (TOS)

TOS is the leading organization of scientists and health professionals devoted to understanding and reversing the epidemic of obesity and its adverse health, economic and societal effects. Combining the perspective of researchers, clinicians, policymakers and patients, TOS promotes innovative research, education and evidence-based clinical care to improve the health and well-being of all people with obesity. For more information, visit www.obesity.org.

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