

## **Burwell Surgery Patient Participation Group (PPG)**

### **Weight loss medications on the NHS**

There has been a lot in the news recently about various weight loss injections, including an announcement by the NHS that one called “Mounjaro” will be available through GP Surgeries. The PPG thought it would be helpful to ask the Surgery to tell us more about who is eligible and how it will work.

*What weight loss drugs are available through Burwell Surgery?*

The specialist obesity service has used weight loss injections in diabetes care for some time. We are now assessing people against the new NHS criteria for the prescription of weight loss medications and those that are eligible are being referred to a service called Healthy You (<https://healthyyou.org.uk/>). This service can prescribe injections such as Mounjaro and Wegovy and offer the appropriate support to go with these interventions.

*What is Mounjaro and how does it work?*

Tirzepatide (also called Mounjaro) is a weight loss medicine that makes you feel fuller for longer and therefore less hungry. It comes in the form of an injection which you inject yourself, once a week. Another similar injection called Wegovy is also used. There are of course some potential risks (for example inflammation of the pancreas gland). But studies have shown a 10-15% weight loss with Wegovy and 15-20% with Mounjaro.

*Is everyone eligible for Mounjaro on the NHS?*

No. At the moment the NHS is prioritising only those with the highest clinical need. To be eligible, people must have both:

- a BMI of 40 or over (37.5 if from an ethnic background)

AND

- 4 out of 5 of the following conditions: type 2 diabetes, high blood pressure, heart and vascular disease, high cholesterol and obstructive sleep apnoea.

Unfortunately if you do not fulfil all of the above criteria the Surgery will not be able to refer you to ‘Healthy You’ to access weight loss injections via this new service. However, it should be noted that this is a pilot service for much wider prescribing of these medications over the next 12 months, so watch out for further communication about this. The NHS will be gradually allowing more groups of people to access these drugs, recognising the constraints of budget (these are expensive drugs) and trained personnel to deliver the service.

*If I am eligible, will the surgery tell me directly or do I need to contact the Surgery?*

We are going to search out the patients we know of that fall into these (quite restricted) categories and offer a referral to Healthy You. It may well be that our records are incomplete in some areas – for example some people do not report symptoms of possible sleep apnoea (snoring with episodes of choking or stopping breathing). If we have not contacted you and you think that you might qualify then please contact us via AskmyGP and we will refer you on as appropriate.

*What should I do if I am concerned about my weight, but am not eligible for Mounjaro on the NHS?*

Please do feel free to discuss issues with your weight with the practice if you would like to. There are a number of services we can access for you (see <https://www.cpics.org.uk/weight-management-services>). These include:

- 1) Free Slimming world or weight watchers membership for 12 weeks
- 2) Some digital programmes like <https://www.england.nhs.uk/digital-weight-management/>
- 3) Specialist health coaching, a variety of other programmes run by ‘Healthy You’ <https://healthyyou.org.uk/services/healthy-weight/>
- 4) Onward referral for specialist services like bariatric surgery.

*Next PPG meeting – all welcome – why not join us online if you can’t make it in person!*

The next two meetings of the PPG will be at 6.30pm on Tuesday 15<sup>th</sup> July and Tuesday 14<sup>th</sup> October at Burwell Day Centre – all welcome. If you would like to attend the PPG for the first time, or if you can’t attend in person but can join via Microsoft Teams, then please contact [cpicb.burwellsurgery.admin@nhs.net](mailto:cpicb.burwellsurgery.admin@nhs.net)