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UK Approves First Oral GLP-1 Weight-Loss Tablet, Expanding Obesity Management Options

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The UK has approved its first GLP-1 receptor agonist tablet for weight loss and weight management, marking a significant development in the treatment of obesity and related metabolic conditions.

The Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency (MHRA) has authorised an oral formulation of semaglutide (Wegovy) for adults with obesity or those who are overweight and have at least one weight-related comorbidity. The approval offers patients a non-injectable alternative to existing GLP-1 therapies, which have gained widespread attention for their effectiveness in supporting weight reduction.

The once-daily tablet is approved for use alongside a reduced-calorie diet and increased physical activity. It may be prescribed to adults with a Body Mass Index (BMI) of 30 or higher, or to individuals with a BMI between 27 and 30 who have at least one obesity-related health condition.

According to the MHRA, treatment begins with a daily dose of 1.5 mg, which is gradually increased to 4 mg, 9 mg and eventually 25 mg, with patients remaining on each dose level for at least one month. Individuals currently using a 2.4 mg weekly semaglutide injection may transition directly to the 25 mg oral tablet.

The approval reflects growing efforts to broaden access to evidence-based obesity treatments amid rising global rates of overweight and obesity. Oral administration is expected to improve convenience for some patients who may be reluctant to use injectable therapies.

"Having met the MHRA's rigorous standards of safety, quality and effectiveness, the semaglutide tablet has been approved in the UK for weight loss and weight management," said Julian Beach, Executive Director of Healthcare Quality and Access at the MHRA. "As with all GLP-1 receptor agonists, this is a prescription-only medication."

Semaglutide belongs to the GLP-1 receptor agonist class of medicines, which mimics the action of glucagon-like peptide-1, a hormone naturally released after eating. By acting on appetite-regulating centres in the brain, semaglutide helps individuals feel fuller for longer, reduces hunger and curbs food cravings, supporting lower calorie intake and weight loss when combined with lifestyle interventions.

Healthcare professionals have been advised to ensure patients follow specific administration guidelines to maximise absorption and effectiveness. The tablet should be taken whole on an empty stomach after fasting for at least eight hours, with only a small amount of water. Patients should wait at least 30 minutes before consuming food or beverages.

The introduction of an oral GLP-1 therapy represents an important milestone in the evolution of obesity management, offering greater flexibility in treatment delivery while reinforcing the role of pharmacological interventions alongside nutrition, physical activity and long-term lifestyle changes.

As demand for weight-management solutions continues to grow globally, the approval is expected to accelerate the adoption of GLP-1-based therapies further and stimulate innovation in oral metabolic health treatments.