

Why Some Ozempic Users Stick With Side Effects, As Long as the Weight Comes Off

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<https://studyfinds.org/ozempic-use-despite-side-effects/>

What are people willing to endure to reach their body goals? A whole lot, according to research focusing on the use of Ozempic for weight loss.

Like many reviewers in a new study, one person endured constant nausea and spent days bedridden from vomiting. Work appointments were missed. The feeling was, in their words, "absolutely horrid." But the weekly Ozempic injections continued. Then the weight stopped coming off, and suddenly all that suffering felt pointless. Treatment stopped.

This pattern shows up repeatedly in an analysis of 60 online reviews from people using Ozempic for weight loss. Researchers from Rutgers University and the University of Sydney discovered gastrointestinal side effects such as nausea, vomiting, diarrhea, and constipation did not significantly influence satisfaction ratings or decisions to continue treatment. What mattered was a single question: Is the scale moving?

Two-thirds of reviewers reported losing weight, suppressing appetite, or eliminating food cravings. These people gave Ozempic high marks even when side effects landed them in bed for days. The other third saw minimal results, and they quit, often rating the drug a dismal 1 out of 10, regardless of whether they felt sick.

"I have had all 5 of the main side effects, nausea, stomach pain, vomiting, diarrhea, and constipation," one person wrote. "I am happy with the weight loss, so am learning to manage these."

Among people who rated Ozempic highly (8-10 out of 10), 78% reported weight loss. Among those who rated it poorly (1-7 out of 10), only 33% lost weight. Yet both groups reported gastrointestinal problems at nearly identical rates (around 60-70%).

The six people who explicitly planned to continue Ozempic despite side effects had one thing in common: every single one was still losing weight. All six experienced adverse events, mostly nausea and stomach issues. Four dealt with additional problems like headaches or gallbladder pain. But the dropping numbers on the scale made it worthwhile.

"The side effects at the beginning were worth it for me," one person explained. Another saw the nausea as helpful: "What it has done is to force me to give up bad habits because I do not like staying nauseous."

Compare that to the 14 people who said they'd quit. Only 36% of them were still losing weight or experiencing appetite suppression. Nearly all (93%) dealt with adverse events, but side effects alone weren't the dealbreaker. Suffering without results was.

About half the reviewers described dramatic appetite changes. One person lost 55 pounds over nearly a year. Another dropped from 192 to 152 pounds in five and a half months. Several said their appetite dropped by 90%, forcing them to remind themselves to eat.

Eight people said their cravings for sugar and greasy food vanished completely. "I found my sugar cravings disappeared once I started taking 1 mg," someone wrote. "I lost all interest in greasy food from .5 mg and up."

But the other side of this story involves people who endured weeks or months of side effects while the scale barely budged. "It has done absolutely NOTHING for me for weight loss," one person reported. Another watched initial progress stall: "It seems to have plateaued as I haven't lost any weight since Christmas and it's now March."

Clinical trials suggest weight loss from semaglutide often plateaus after about a year, with some people experiencing weight regain in year two as bodies adapt metabolically. The reviewers in this dataset didn't consistently report how long they'd been on the drug, so the researchers couldn't confirm that timing pattern in this group.

While common nausea didn't predict who would quit, more serious complications were more common among people who gave lower ratings or planned to stop. Several reviewers described emergency room visits for severe dehydration. Others needed gallbladder removal.

Two reviewers reported depression they attributed to Ozempic. "The worst side effect for me was depression," one wrote. "I would have mild anxiety and this drug made it a lot worse and made my mood very low."

More than half of respondents gave Ozempic either the highest possible rating (10) or the lowest (1), almost nothing in between. For many reviewers, the drug either felt life-changing or deeply disappointing.

The researchers analyzed reviews posted on Drugs.com, with data extraction occurring in June 2023 (the oldest review dated from February 2023). This timing captured peak media attention on Ozempic for cosmetic weight loss. People selected "weight loss" as their reason for using the drug, even though it's officially approved only for type 2 diabetes. Drugs.com has since removed weight loss as a category option.

The findings appeared in the Journal of Medical Internet Research. The data came from self-reported, anonymous reviews without demographic details or independent verification of outcomes, but it also offers a glimpse into how people weigh the trade-offs in real life. These are unsolicited accounts rather than responses to structured survey questions.

Clinical trials measure safety and efficacy. Online reviews reveal what patients actually care about when deciding whether to stick with a medication. For many reviewers in this study, visible weight loss outweighed discomfort. When results faded, so did their patience.