

# Liraglutide (Victoza or Saxenda)

## What is it used for?

Saxenda (3 mg dose) is a medication that is used to treat obesity in adults and children ages 12 years old and older. It has been approved by the Food and Drug Administration (FDA). The same medication, at a different dose, is also known as Victoza (1.8 mg dose) and is approved to treat type 2 diabetes.

## How does it work?

- Saxenda and Victoza work by copying the actions of a hormone called glucagon-like peptide-1 (GLP-1).
- After you eat a meal, insulin (a hormone) is produced. This medication works by increasing the amount of insulin produced. This will lower your blood sugar.
- Saxenda and Victoza also stimulate part of the brain that controls appetite (feelings of hunger). It also slows down the rate that food leaves your stomach. You will feel full for a longer period of time. Together, these actions help you feel less hungry.

## How should I take this medication?

Saxenda and Victoza are taken once a day as an injection – most people either chose to give it either in the morning or in the evening.

- For Victoza:
  - Week 1: 0.6 mg once a day
  - Week 2: 1.2 mg once a day
  - Final Dose (as tolerated): 1.8 mg once a day
- For Saxenda:
  - Week 1: 0.6 mg once a day
  - Week 2: 1.2 mg once a day
  - Week 3: 1.8 mg once a day
  - Week 4: 2.4 mg once a day
  - Final Dose (as tolerated): 3.0 mg once a day
- Saxenda and Victoza can be injected into your stomach, upper thigh, upper arm, or upper buttock. Use a different place on the body for each injection.
- Make sure to count to 5 very S-L-O-W-L-Y while you are injecting Saxenda or Victoza. Your body only needs a very tiny amount of the medication. You will notice only a tiny amount coming out of the needle.
- You should also count to 5 slowly when you are taking out the needle from your skin. By doing this, you are making sure that your body has gotten all the medication.
- If you miss a dose of Saxenda or Victoza, skip that dose and take your next dose at the next prescribed time. Do not take 2 doses of Saxenda or Victoza at the same time.

## Endocrinology

### **What are the potential side effects?**

The most common side effects include:

- nausea
- vomiting (throwing up)
- decreased appetite
- indigestion (pain or discomfort in the stomach after eating)
- constipation (hard to poop or not often enough)

Both Saxenda and Victoza may make your stomach feel upset.

If this happens, it may help to:

- Eat smaller meals and eat slower.
- Eat small meals or snacks throughout the day instead of one large meal.
- Take about 15 – 20 minutes to eat your meal.
- Eat about half of what you usually eat.
- Add fruits, vegetables, whole grains and lean proteins to meals and snacks.
- Limit foods that are spicy, greasy or fried.
- Limit packaged snacks like cookies, chips, cakes, doughnuts, ice cream.
- Drink water instead of sweet drinks like soda, lemonade, sports drinks.
- Avoid alcohol.
- Take Saxenda and Victoza with food to help decrease stomach upset.
- Pay attention to how you are feeling when you eat. When you feel full, stop eating. This will give your stomach time to empty.
- Usually, the nausea goes away. If it doesn't, please call us. We can help you with other ideas to decrease nausea.

### **Will Saxenda and Victoza lower my blood sugar?**

There is a small chance you may have some low blood sugar after taking the medication. (Note: If you are also taking insulin, your doctor may recommend adjusting your insulin dose to avoid low blood sugars.)

The signs of low blood sugar are:

- weakness
- shaky
- hungry
- sweating
- confusion

**\*\*If you notice these signs, please have something to eat or drink and call the doctor.**

### **Are there any other risks to these medications?**

The risk of pancreatitis (inflammation of the pancreas) has been rarely associated with Saxenda and Victoza. If you have had pancreatitis in the past, these medications may not be the right medication. Notify the doctor if you have any history of problems with your pancreas.

Symptoms of pancreatitis include:

- pain in your upper stomach area which may travel to your back and may worsen after eating.
- stomach area may be tender to the touch
- vomiting, nausea and/or fever

### **Endocrinology**

**\*\*If you should develop any of these symptoms, stop the Saxenda or Victoza and contact your doctor. They will do a blood test to check for pancreatitis.**

Saxenda and Victoza has been associated with thyroid cancer in animal studies. You should not use Saxenda and Victoza if:

1. you have a history of certain types of thyroid cancers or
2. if you have a family history of Multiple Endocrine Neoplasia (MEN) syndrome.

**\*\*Notify your doctor if you develop a lump on your neck, hoarseness (unusual change in your voice), difficulty swallowing or breathing.**

### How do I store Victoza/Saxenda?

Victoza/Saxenda can be stored at room temperature, or in the refrigerator, for 30 days after opening. Do not freeze Victoza or leave the pen in high temperatures above 100 degrees Fahrenheit.

### How much Victoza do I take?

To reduce the side effects, it is recommended to *slowly increase* the dose of Victoza and Saxenda weekly until you reach your prescribed dose.

VICTOZA	
First week	Take 0.6mg once a day from _____ to _____
Second week	Take 1.2 mg once a day from _____ to _____
Third week and on	Take 1.8mg once a day from _____ and continuing daily.
SAXENDA	
First week	Take 0.6mg once a day from _____ to _____
Second week	Take 1.2 mg once a day from _____ to _____
Third week	Take 1.8mg once a day from _____ to _____
Fourth week	Take 2.4 mg once a day from _____ to _____
Fifth week and on	Take 3.0 mg once a day from _____ and continuing daily.

### Who do I call if I have questions or concerns?

<b>Endocrine Clinic</b>	323-361-4606
<b>Office Hours</b>	Monday – Friday, 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.
<b>Who do I call after office hours?</b>	Call 323-361-2403, ask for the endocrinologist on call