

肥胖末日

The End of Obesity

The Economist

听读系列



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社论

吃饭、打针、再来一轮

新药物可能终结流行全世界的肥胖问题

Leaders

Eat, inject, repeat

New drugs could spell an end to the world's obesity epidemic

Rain

bilibili 狂奔的外刊

1. A NEW TYPE of drug is generating excitement among the rich and the beautiful. Just a **jab** a week, and the weight **falls off**. Elon Musk **swears** by it; **influencers** sing its **praises** on TikTok; suddenly **slimmer** Hollywood **starlets** deny they have taken it.



jab /dʒæb/ **noun** (BrE) (informal) an **INJECTION** to help prevent you from catching a disease 注射; 接种; 预防针

fall off to decrease in quantity or quality 数量减少; 质量下降

swear /sweə/ **verb** [T, no passive] to make a serious promise to do sth 郑重承诺; 发誓要; 表示决心要

influencer **noun** someone who affects or changes the way that people behave (对他人) 有影响力的人

praise /preɪz/ **noun** [U] (also *less frequent praises* [pl.]) words that show approval of or admiration for sb/sth 赞扬; 称赞; 赞美

slimmer /'slɪmə/ **noun** (BrE) a person who is trying to lose weight 减肥者; 减轻体重者

starlet /'stɑ:lɪt/ **noun** a young woman actor who plays small parts and hopes to become famous 尚未成名的年轻女演员

But the latest weight-loss drugs are no mere **cosmetic enhancements**. Their biggest **beneficiaries** will be not **celebrities** in **Los Angeles** or **Miami** but **billions** of ordinary people around the world whose weight has made them unhealthy.



cosmetic /kɒz'metɪk/ **adjective** connected with medical treatment that is intended to improve a person's appearance 整容的

enhance /ɪn'hɑːns/ **verb** ~ **sth** to increase or further improve the good quality, value or status of sb/sth 提高; 增强; 增进

beneficiary /benɪ'fɪʃ(ə)rɪ/ **noun pl. bene-fi-ci-aries** ~ (of sth) a person who gains as a result of sth 受益者; 受惠人

celebrity /sɪ'lebrɪti/ **noun pl. ce-leb-rities** (also **informal celeb**) [C] a famous person 名人; 名流

Los Angeles **noun** 洛杉矶 (美国加利福尼亚州南部城市, 位于太平洋沿岸, 是美国第二大、加利福尼亚州最大城市)

Miami **noun** 迈阿密 (美国佛罗里达州的港口城市, 度假胜地)

billion /'bɪljən/ **noun** a billion or billions (of ...) (**informal**) a very large amount 数以十亿计, 大量

2. Treatments for weight loss have long ranged from the **well-meaning** and **ineffective** to the **downright dodgy**. The new class of drugs, called **GLP-1 receptor agonists**, seems actually to work.



well meaning adjective intending to do what is right and helpful but often not succeeding 出于好心的，好心好意的，善意的（但常事与愿违）

ineffective /ɪnɪ'fektɪv/ **adjective** not achieving what you want to achieve; not having any effect 无效果的；不起作用的；不奏效的

downright /'daʊnraɪt/ **adjective** [only before noun] used as a way of emphasizing sth negative or unpleasant （强调反面的或令人不快的事物）彻头彻尾的，十足的，完全的

dodgy /'dɒdʒɪ/ **adjective** (BrE) (informal) **dodgi-er, dodgi-est** not working well; not in good condition 有毛病的；运转不良的；状况不佳的

GLP-1 receptor agonists noun 胰高血糖素样肽-1受体激动剂即GLP-1受体激动剂，是一类治疗2型糖尿病的药物。该类药物能够通过激动胰高血糖素样肽-1受体，发挥肠促胰岛素的作用而产生降糖效果，是一类既能降血糖，又能降低体重的促胰岛素分泌药物，还在心血管保护作用中表现出优势。

Semaglutide, developed by **Novo Nordisk**, a **Danish pharmaceutical** firm, has been shown in **clinical trials** to lead to weight loss of about 15%.



Semaglutide *noun* 索玛鲁肽 (semaglutide) 是由丹麦诺和诺德公司(NovoNordisk)开发的新一代GLP-1 (胰高血糖素样肽-1) 类似物

Novo Nordisk *noun* 诺和诺德公司, 诺和诺德公司在行业内拥有最为广泛的糖尿病治疗产品, 其中包括最先进的胰岛素给药系统产品, 80多年来一直是世界糖尿病研究和药物开发领域的主导。

Danish /'deɪnɪʃ/ *adjective* from or connected with Denmark 丹麦的

pharmaceutical /ˌfɑːmə'suːtɪk(ə)/ *adjective* [only before noun] connected with making and selling drugs and medicines 制药的; 配药的; 卖药的

clinical trial *noun* 临床试验

It is already being sold under the brand name **Wegovy** in America, **Denmark** and **Norway** and will soon be available in other countries; **Ozempic**, a lower-dose version, is a **diabetes** drug that is also being used “**off label**” for weight loss.



Wegovy *noun* Wegovy是一种胰高血糖素样肽-1(GLP-1)受体激动剂。

Denmark /'denma:k/ *noun* 丹麦 (北欧国家)

Norway /'nɔ:wei/ *noun* 挪威 (北欧国家)

Ozempic *noun* 诺和泰司美格鲁肽注射液，诺和诺德公司新型长效GLP-1类似物

dose /dəʊs/ *noun* an amount of a medicine or a drug that is taken once, or regularly over a period of time (药的) 一剂，一服

diabetes /ˌdaɪəˈbi:tɪz/ *noun* [U] a medical condition which makes the patient produce a lot of **urine** and feel very thirsty. There are several types of diabetes. 糖尿病；多尿症

off-label *adjective* relating to the use of a drug for sth other than what it was originally created for (药物) 有标签外作用的，未按标签说明使用的

A **rival** GLP-1 drug, made by **Eli Lilly**, an American firm, is due to come **on sale** later this year and is more effective still. **Analysts** think the market for GLP-1 drugs could reach \$150bn by 2031, not far off the market for cancer drugs today. Some think they could become as common as **beta blockers** or **statins**.



rival /'raɪvəl/ **adjective** [only before noun]

a rival bid/claim/offer 竞标; 对立的权利要求; 竞价

Eli Lilly **noun** 礼来公司, 于1876年5月10日成立, 是一家制药公司。1876年由药学家 Eli Lilly 创建, 并最终以其姓名命名。迄今已有130多年的历史。

on sale (especially NAmE, SAfrE) being offered at a reduced price 折价销售; 减价出售

analyst /'æn(ə)lɪst/ **noun** a person whose job involves examining facts or materials in order to give an opinion on them 分析者; 化验员

beta blocker **noun** a drug used to control heart rhythm, treat severe chest pain and reduce high blood pressure * β 受体阻滞药 (用以控制心率、治疗严重胸部疼痛和降低血压)

statin /'stæɪn/ **noun** a drug that people take to lower the level of **CHOLESTEROL** (= a substance in the body that can cause heart disease) in their blood. There are several types of statin. 胆固醇合成酶抑制剂

3. The drugs could not have arrived at a better time. In 2020 two-fifths of the world's population were **overweight** or **obese**. By 2035, says the **World Obesity Federation**, an **NGO**, that figure could **swell** to more than half, with a **staggering** **4bn** people overweight or obese.



overweight /əʊvə'weɪt/ **adjective** (of people 人) too heavy and fat 太胖的; 超重的

obese /ə(ʊ)'bi:s/ **adjective** (*formal or medical* 医)(of people 人) very fat, in a way that is not healthy 臃肿的; 虚胖的; 病态肥胖的

World Obesity Federation **noun** 世界肥胖联盟

NGO **abbr.** **non-governmental organization** (a charity, association, etc. that is independent of government and business) 非政府组织 (独立于政府或商界的慈善机构、协会等)

swell /swel/ **verb** [**T**, **I**] to increase or make sth increase in number or size (使) 增加, 增大, 扩大

staggering /'stægərɪŋ/ **adjective** (*rather informal*) so great, shocking or surprising that it is difficult to believe 令人难以相信的

bn **abbr.** (*BrE*)(in writing) **BILLION** (书写形式) 十亿

People everywhere are getting fatter. The populations **putting on pounds** the fastest are not in the rich West but in countries like **Egypt**, **Mexico** and **Saudi Arabia**.



put on to become heavier, especially by the amount mentioned 增加（若干）体重；发胖

pound /paʊnd/ **noun** [C] (*abbr. lb*) a unit for measuring weight, equal to 0.454 of a kilogram 磅（重量单位，合 0.454 千克）

Egypt /'i:dʒɪpt/ **noun** [sing.] a country in North Africa 埃及（北非国家）

Mexico /'meksikəʊ/ **noun** [sing.] a country in southern North America 墨西哥（北美洲南部国家）

Saudi Arabia /'saʊdi ə'reɪbjə/ **noun** [sing.] a country in south-western Asia 沙特阿拉伯（西南亚国家）

4. These trends are **alarming** because obesity causes a **host** of health problems, including diabetes, heart disease and high **blood pressure**, as well as **dozens** of illnesses such as **stroke**, **gout** and various **cancers**.



alarming /ə'la:mɪn/ **adjective** causing worry and fear 使人惊恐的; 令人惊慌的; 引起恐慌的

host /həʊst/ **noun** [C] ~ of sb/sth a large number of people or things 许多; 大量

blood pressure **noun** [U] the pressure of blood as it travels around the body 血压

dozen /'dʌz(ə)n/ **noun** **dozens** [pl.] (*informal*) a lot of people or things 许多; 很多

stroke /strəʊk/ **noun** a sudden serious illness when a blood **vessel** (= tube) in the brain bursts or is blocked, which can cause death or the loss of the ability to move or to speak clearly 中风

gout /gaʊt/ **noun** [U] a disease that causes painful swelling in the joints, especially of the toes, knees and fingers 痛风 (病)

cancer /'kænsəl/ **noun** [U, C] a serious disease in which **growths** of cells, also called cancers, form in the body and kill normal body cells. The disease often causes death. 癌; 癌症

Carrying extra weight made people more likely to die of covid-19. And then there is the **misery** that **comes from** the **stigma associated** with being fat, which affects children in schools and playgrounds most cruelly of all.



misery /'mɪz(ə)rɪ/ **noun** [U] great suffering of the mind or body 痛苦; 悲惨

comes from to start in a particular place or be produced from a particular thing 始于; 产自; 来自

stigma /'stɪgmə/ **noun** [U, C, usually sing.] feelings of disapproval that people have about particular illnesses or ways of behaving 耻辱; 羞耻

associated /ə'soʃɪeɪtɪd/ **adjective** if one thing is **associated with** another, the two things are connected because they happen together or one thing causes the other 有关联的; 相关的

5. The consequences of obesity for the public purse and the wider economy are large. According to modelling by academics the annual cost to the world economy of excess weight could reach \$4trn by 2035 (2.9% of global GDP, up from 2.2% in 2019). That includes both spending on health care and working time lost to illness and premature deaths tied to obesity.



the public purse *noun* money from the government 国库

according to *prep.* as stated or reported by sb/sth 据 (... 所说) ; 按 (... 所报道)

modelling */ˈmɒdəlɪŋ/ noun [U]* the work of making a simple description of a system or a process that can be used to explain it, etc. 系统模型化; 系统模型的建立

academic */ækəˈdemɪk/ noun* a person who teaches and/or does research at a university or college 高等院校教师; 高校科研人员

trillion */ˈtrɪljən/ noun* 1 000 000 000 000; one million million 万亿; 兆

GDP */ˌdʒiː diː ˈpiː/ noun* 国内生产总值, 国内生产毛额 (全写为 gross domestic product)

premature */ˈpremətʃʊə/ adjective* happening before the normal or expected time 未成熟的; 过早的; 提前

6. The world's expanding **waistlines** are not a sign of the moral failure of the billions who are overweight, but the result of **biology**. The **genes** that were vital to helping humans survive winters and **famine** still help the body **cling on to** its weight today.



waistline /'weis(t)lain/ **noun** the amount that a person measures around the waist, used to talk about how fat or thin they are 腰围

biology /baɪ'ɒlədʒɪ/ **noun** [U] the scientific study of the life and structure of plants and animals 生物学

gene /dʒiːn/ **noun** (*biology* 生) a unit inside a cell which controls a particular quality in a living thing that has been passed on from its parents 基因

famine /'fæmɪn/ **noun** [C, U] a lack of food during a long period of time in a region 饥荒

cling to sth | cling on to sth to be unwilling to get rid of sth, or stop doing sth 不愿放弃; 坚持

The **superabundance** of hard-to-resist processed foods in recent decades has brought greater convenience and lower costs, but also **triggered overeating** just as **lifestyles** became more **sedentary**.



superabundance *noun* [**sing.**, **U**] (*formal*) much more than enough of sth 过多; 过剩

trigger /'trɪɡə/ *verb* ~ sth (**off**) to make sth happen suddenly 发动; 引起; 触发

overeat /əʊvər'i:t/ *verb* [**I**] to eat more than you need or more than is healthy 吃得过量; 吃撑了

lifestyle /'laɪf.staɪl/ *noun* [**C**, **U**] the way in which a person or a group of people lives and works 生活方式; 工作方式

sedentary /'sed(ə)nt(ə)rɪ/ *adjective* (of work, activities, etc. 工作、活动等) in which you spend a lot of time sitting down 需要久坐的

Once the **fat** is on, the body fights any **attempt** to **diet** away more than a little of its total weight. **Despite** the \$250bn that consumers around the world spent on dieting and weight loss last year, the battle to get slim was largely being lost.



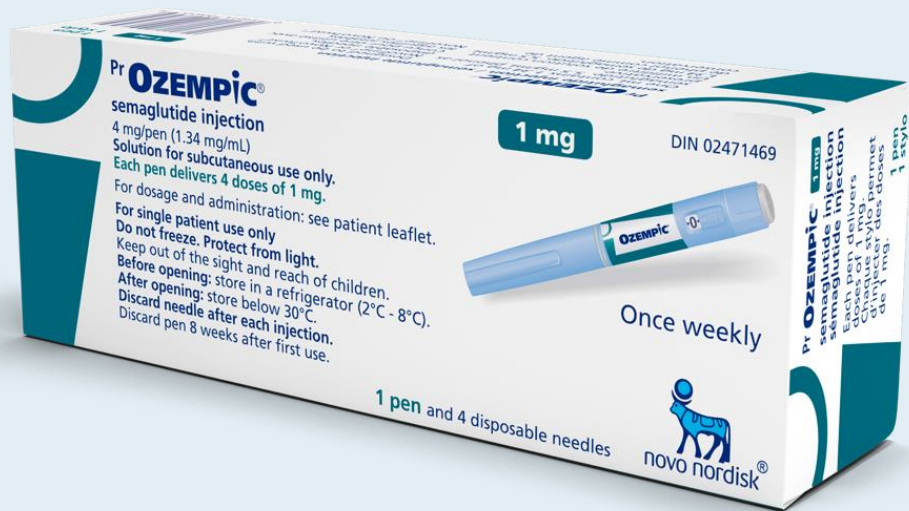
fat /fæt/ **noun** [U] a white or yellow substance in the bodies of animals and humans, stored under the skin 脂肪; 肥肉

attempt /ə'tem(p)t/ **noun** [C, U] an act of trying to do sth, especially sth difficult, often with no success 企图; 试图; 尝试

diet /'daɪət/ **verb** [I] to eat less food or only food of a particular type in order to lose weight 节食; 进行规定饮食

despite /dɪ'spaɪt/ **prep.** used to show that sth happened or is true although sth else might have happened to prevent it 即使; 尽管

7. The new obesity drugs arrived by **serendipity**, after treatments meant for diabetics were observed to cause weight loss. Semaglutide **mimics** the release of **hormones** that **stimulate** a feeling of fullness and reduce the **appetite**.



serendipity /ˌser(ə)n'dɪpɪti/ **noun** [U] the fact of sth interesting or pleasant happening by chance 巧事；机缘凑巧

mimic /'mɪmɪk/ **noun** a person or an animal that can copy the voice, movements, etc. of others 会模仿的人（或动物）

hormone /'hɔːməʊn/ **noun** a chemical substance produced in the body or in a plant that encourages growth or influences how the cells and **TISSUES** function; an artificial substance that has similar effects 激素；荷尔蒙

stimulate /'stɪmjʊleɪt/ **verb** ~ sth (*technical* 术语) to make a part of the body function 促进（身体某部分）的功能

appetite /'æpɪtaɪt/ **noun** [U, C, usually sing.] physical desire for food 食欲；胃口

They also **switch off** the powerful urge to eat that **lurks** inside the brain, waiting to **ambush** even the **keenest dieter**.



switch off (*informal*) to stop thinking about sth or paying attention to sth 不再想着；不再注意；失去兴趣

lurk /lɜ:k/ **verb** [I] (+ *adv./prep.*) when sth unpleasant or dangerous **lurks**, it is present but not in an obvious way (不好或危险的事) 潜在，隐藏着

ambush /'æmbʊʃ/ **verb** ~ **sb/sth** to make a surprise attack on sb/sth from a hidden position 伏击

keen /ki:n/ **adjective** [*usually before noun*] (*especially BrE*) enthusiastic about an activity or idea, etc. 热情的；热心的

dieter /'daɪətə/ **noun** a person who is trying to lose weight on a diet 节食者；限制饮食的人

8. With the jabs already in high demand, investors are nearly as **giddy** as newly slim users. The market **capitalisation** of Novo Nordisk, the firm at the front of the **gold rush**, has **doubled** in two years, to \$326bn, making it the second-most-valuable **listed** drugmaker in the world.



giddy /'ɡɪdɪ/ **adjective** (*old-fashioned*) (of people 人) not serious 轻率的; 轻浮的; 不稳重的

capitalise /'kæpɪtəlaɪz/ **verb** [**usually passive**] ~ sth (*business* 商) to provide a company etc. with the money it needs to function 为 ... 提供运营资本 (或资金)

gold rush **noun** a situation in which a lot of people suddenly go to a place where gold has recently been discovered 淘金热

double /'dʌb(ə)l/ **verb** [**I, T**] to become, or make sth become, twice as much or as many (使) 加倍; 是 ... 的两倍

list /lɪst/ **verb** [**T**] to make a company's shares available on a particular financial market (公司) 上市

Analysts expect half of obese Americans who seek help to be on GLP-1 drugs by **the turn of the decade**. But, as with any new medicine that holds so much **promise** for so many, there are **uncertainties**. Two big ones will be safety and affordability.

the turn of the century/year the time when a new century/year starts 世纪之交; 新年伊始; 辞旧迎新之际

promise /'prɒmɪs/ **noun** [U] a sign that sb/sth will be successful 获得成功的迹象

uncertainty /ʌn'sɜːt(ə)ntɪ/ **noun** [C] something that you cannot be sure about; a situation that causes you to be or feel uncertain 拿不定的事; 令人无把握的局面



9. Consider safety first. The newness of these drugs means that their **long-term** consequences are not yet known. For the lower-dose forms **prescribed** for diabetes, the **side-effects**, such as **vomiting** and **diarrhoea**, have been mild. But others could **crop up** as the drugs are used more widely and at higher doses.



long-term adjective [usually before noun] that will last or have an effect over a long period of time 长期的; 长远的; 长期有效的

prescribe /pri'skraɪb/ **verb** (of a doctor 医生) to tell sb to take a particular medicine or have a particular treatment; to write a **PRESCRIPTION** for a particular medicine, etc. 给 ... 开 (药); 让 ... 采用 (疗法); 开 (处方)

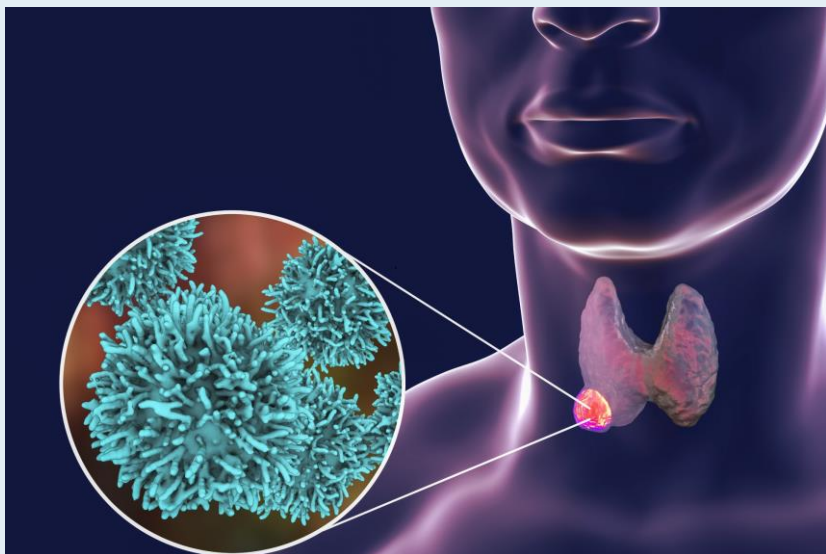
side-effect noun [usually pl.] an extra and usually bad effect that a drug has on you, as well as curing illness or pain (药物的) 副作用

vomit /'vɒmɪt/ **verb** (also *informal* ,**throw 'up**) [I, T] to bring food from the stomach back out through the mouth 呕; 吐; 呕吐

diarrhoea /_daɪə'riə/ **noun** [U] an illness in which waste matter is emptied from the **BOWELS** much more frequently than normal, and in liquid form 腹泻

crop up to appear or happen, especially when it is not expected (尤指意外地) 出现, 发生 bilibili 狂奔的外刊

Animal studies have shown a higher **incidence** of **thyroid** cancer, and semaglutide is associated with a rare **pancreatitis**. Little is known about the effects of using them during or just before pregnancy. All this will require careful **analysis** through **controlled** **longitudinal** studies.



incidence /'ɪnsɪd(ə)ns/ **noun** [C, usually sing.] ~ of sth (*formal*) the extent to which sth happens or has an effect 发生范围；影响程度；发生率

thyroid /'θaɪrɔɪd/ **noun** (*anatomy* 解) a small organ at the front of the neck that produces **HORMONES** that control the way in which the body grows and functions 甲状腺

pancreatitis /ˌpæŋkriə'taɪtɪs/ **noun** a condition that causes pain and swelling in the pancreas (= the organ in the body that produces insulin) 胰腺炎

analysis /ə'nælɪsɪs/ **noun** [U, C] the detailed study or examination of sth in order to understand more about it; the result of the study (对事物的) 分析，分析结果

controlled /kən'trəʊld/ **adjective** done or arranged in a very careful way 十分小心完成的；精心安排的

longitudinal /ˌlɒn(d)ʒɪ'tjuːdɪn(ə)l/ **adjective** concerning the development of sth over a period of time 纵向的

10. Understanding these risks will be important, because many patients who take the drugs may need them for the rest of their lives. As with **ditching** a diet, stopping a high dose of semaglutide is associated with much of the lost weight **piling back on**. Some people even **gain** more weight than they lost in the first place.

ditch /dɪtʃ/ **verb** [T] ~ sth/sb (*informal*) to get rid of sth/sb because you no longer want or need it/them 摆脱; 抛弃; 丢弃

pile on (especially of a person's weight 尤指体重) to increase quickly 剧增; 猛增

gain /geɪn/ **verb** [T] ~ sth to gradually get more of sth 增加; 增添; 增进; 增长



11. Another **preoccupation** for policymakers is cost. In America the bill for Wegovy runs at around \$1,300 a month; for Ozempic about \$900. Judged by such prices, **lifelong** prescriptions look **forbiddingly** expensive. The longer view, however, is more encouraging.

preoccupation /priˌɒkjʊˈpeɪʃ(ə)n/ **noun** [U, C] ~
(with sth) a state of thinking about sth continuously; sth that you think about frequently or for a long time 盘算; 思虑; 长久思考的事情

lifelong /ˈlaɪflɒŋ/ **adjective** [only before noun] lasting or existing all through your life 终身的; 毕生的

forbidding /fəˈbɪdɪŋ/ **adjective** seeming unfriendly and frightening and likely to cause harm or danger 冷峻的; 令人生畏的



In time, companies may **strike deals** with governments and health providers to cover the whole population, ensuring high **volumes** **in return for** low prices.



in time after a period of time when a situation has changed 经过一段时间之后; 迟早; 最后; 终于

strike a bargain/deal to make an agreement with sb in which both sides have an advantage 达成 (对双方都有利的) 协议

volume /ˈvɒljʊ:m/ **noun** [U, C] the amount of sth 量; 额

in return (for sth) as a way of thanking sb or paying them for sth they have done 作为 (对...的) 回报

The prospect of profits is already luring competition and **spurring innovation**. **Amgen**, **AstraZeneca** and **Pfizer** are all working on rival drugs;



spur /spɜː/ **verb** (-rr-) to encourage sb to do sth or to encourage them to try harder to achieve sth 鞭策; 激励; 刺激; 鼓舞

innovation /ɪnə'veɪʃ(ə)n/ **noun** [U] ~ (in sth) the introduction of new things, ideas or ways of doing sth (新事物、思想或方法的) 创造; 创新; 改革

Amgen **noun** 安进, 全球生物科技巨头

AstraZeneca **noun** 阿斯利康, 全球性生物制药企业

Pfizer **noun** 辉瑞公司, 美国生物制药公司



Novo Nordisk has a full **pipeline** of **follow-on** drugs. Further ahead still, patents will **expire**, **enabling** the development of lower-priced **generics**.



pipeline /ˈpaɪpleɪn/ **noun** a series of pipes that are usually underground and are used for carrying oil, gas, etc. over long distances 输油管道, 输气管道, 输送管线 (通常指地下的), 这里指药物生产线

follow on to go somewhere after sb else has gone there 跟着走; 接着来; 随后去

expire /ɪkˈspaɪə/ **verb** [I] (*literary*) to die 逝世; 去世; 故去

enable /ɪnˈeɪb(ə)l/ **verb** to make it possible for sth to happen or exist by creating the necessary conditions 使成为可能; 使可行; 使实现

generic /dʒɪˈnerɪk/ **noun** a product, especially a drug, that is no longer owned or legally controlled by a particular company (尤指药品) 无专利的, 不受某一厂商控制的

The shape of things to come

12. What to do in the meantime?

Governments must ensure that those who most need the drugs get them, leaving those taking them for cosmetic purposes to pay out of their own pockets.

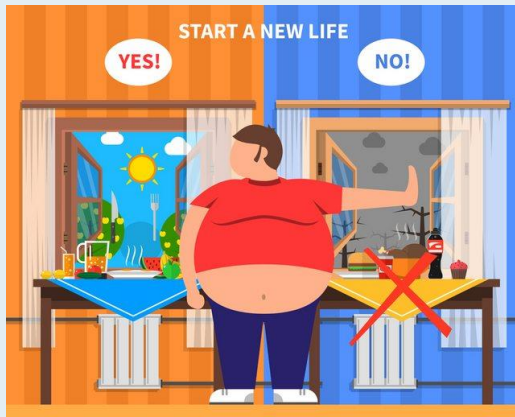


the shape of things to come the way things are likely to develop in the future 未来的状况

in the meantime in the period of time between two times or two events 其间; 同时

pocket /'pɒkɪt/ *noun* [usually sing.] used to talk about the amount of money that you have to spend 钱财; 财力; 资金

The long-term effects must be carefully studied. States should keep pressing other **anti**-obesity measures, such as exercise, healthy eating and better food **labelling**, which may help prevent people from getting fat **in the first place**. But **spare** a moment to celebrate, too. These new drugs mean that the world's fight against **flab** may **eventually** be won.



anti /'æntɪ/ **prefix** (in nouns and adjectives 构成名词和形容词) opposed to; against 反; 反对

label /'leɪb(ə)/ **verb** -ll-, *especially US-l-* [**often passive**] ~ sth to fix a label on sth or write information on sth 贴标签于; 用标签标明

in the first place used at the end of a sentence to talk about why sth was done or whether it should have been done or not (用于句尾, 谈论某事为何或是否应该做) 究竟, 到底, 当初

spare /speə/ **verb** to make sth such as time or money available to sb or for sth, especially when it requires an effort for you to do this 抽出; 拨出; 留出; 匀出

flab /flæb/ **noun** [U] (*informal, disapproving*) soft, loose flesh on a person's body (人体) 松弛的肌肉

eventually /ɪ'ventʃʊəli/ **adverb** at the end of a period of time or a series of events 最后; 终于

肥胖末日

The End of Obesity

The Economist

听读系列



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社论

吃饭、打针、再来一轮

新药物可能终结流行全世界的肥胖问题

Leaders

Eat, inject, repeat

New drugs could spell an end to the world's obesity epidemic

Rain

bilibili 狂奔的外刊

1. A NEW TYPE of drug is generating excitement among the rich and the beautiful. Just a jab a week, and the weight falls off. Elon Musk swears by it; influencers sing its praises on TikTok; suddenly slimmer Hollywood starlets deny they have taken it.

一种新型的药物令富人和美女兴奋。每周只需打一针，体重就会下降。埃隆-马斯克为它发誓担保；网红们在TikTok上为它唱赞歌；突然变瘦的好莱坞女明星否认自己服用过它。

But the latest weight-loss drugs are no mere cosmetic enhancements. Their biggest beneficiaries will be not celebrities in Los Angeles or Miami but billions of ordinary people around the world whose weight has made them unhealthy.

但是，最新的减肥药并不只是美容上的提升。药品最大的受益者不是来自洛杉矶或迈阿密的名人，而是全世界数十亿因肥胖产生健康问题的普通人。

2. Treatments for weight loss have long ranged from the wellmeaning and ineffective to the downright dodgy. The new class of drugs, called GLP-1 receptor agonists, seems actually to work. Semaglutide, developed by Novo Nordisk, a Danish pharmaceutical firm, has been shown in clinical trials to lead to weight loss of about 15%.

长期以来，减肥的办法既有出于好意但收效甚微的也有完全不可靠的。新的一类药物，称为GLP-1受体激动剂，似乎确实有效。由丹麦诺和诺德制药公司开发的塞马鲁肽(Semaglutide)，在临床试验中已被证明可使体重减轻约15%。

It is already being sold under the brand name Wegovy in America, Denmark and Norway and will soon be available in other countries; Ozempic, a lower-dose version, is a diabetes drug that is also being used “off label” for weight loss.

它已经以Wegovy的品牌名称在美国、丹麦和挪威销售，并将很快在其他国家上市；Ozempic是一种低剂量的糖尿病药物，也有标注外的减肥疗效。

A rival GLP-1 drug, made by Eli Lilly, an American firm, is due to come on sale later this year and is more effective still. Analysts think the market for GLP-1 drugs could reach \$150bn by 2031, not far off the market for cancer drugs today. Some think they could become as common as beta blockers or statins.

由美国公司Eli Lilly生产的一种对标GLP-1的药物将于今年晚些时候上市，而且更加有效。分析师认为，到2031年，GLP-1药物的市场可能达到1500亿美元，与今天的癌症药物市场相差不远。一些人认为它们可能会变得像 β 受体阻滞剂或胆固醇合成酶抑制剂一样普遍。

3. The drugs could not have arrived at a better time. In 2020 two-fifths of the world's population were overweight or obese. By 2035, says the World Obesity Federation, an NGO, that figure could swell to more than half, with a staggering 4bn people overweight or obese. People everywhere are getting fatter. The populations putting on pounds the fastest are not in the rich West but in countries like Egypt, Mexico and Saudi Arabia.

这些药物的出现时机再好不过了。2020年，世界上有五分之一的人口超重或肥胖。非政府组织“世界肥胖联盟”说，到2035年，这个数字可能会膨胀到一半以上，有40亿人超重或肥胖，这种现象令人吃惊。全球各地的人都在变胖。肥胖速度最快的人口并不在在富裕的西方，而是在埃及、墨西哥和沙特阿拉伯等国家。

4. These trends are alarming because obesity causes a host of health problems, including diabetes, heart disease and high blood pressure, as well as dozens of illnesses such as stroke, gout and various cancers. Carrying extra weight made people more likely to die of covid-19. And then there is the misery that comes from the stigma associated with being fat, which affects children in schools and playgrounds most cruelly of all.

这些趋势令人震惊，因为肥胖会导致一系列的健康问题，包括糖尿病、心脏病和高血压，以及中风、痛风和各种癌症等几十种疾病。额外的体重使人们更有可能死于covid-19。还有就是与肥胖相关的污名所带来的心理上的痛苦，对学校和操场上的儿童来说，这种影响最为残酷。

5. The consequences of obesity for the public purse and the wider economy are large. According to modelling by academics the annual cost to the world economy of excess weight could reach \$4trn by 2035 (2.9% of global GDP, up from 2.2% in 2019). That includes both spending on health care and working time lost to illness and premature deaths tied to obesity.

肥胖对公共财政和更广泛的经济造成的后果是巨大的。根据学者们的系统模型估计，到2035年，超重对世界经济的年度成本可能达到40万亿美元（占全球GDP的2.9%，高于2019年的2.2%）。这包括医疗保健的支出和因疾病而损失的工作时间，以及与肥胖有关的过早死亡。

6. The world's expanding waistlines are not a sign of the moral failure of the billions who are overweight, but the result of biology. The genes that were vital to helping humans survive winters and famine still help the body cling on to its weight today. The superabundance of hard-to-resist processed foods in recent decades has brought greater convenience and lower costs, but also triggered overeating just as lifestyles became more sedentary.

世界上不断扩大的腰围并不是数十亿超重者道德失败的标志，而是生物学的结果。这是帮助人类熬过冬天和饥荒的至关重要的基因，今天仍然帮助身体维持体重。近几十年来，难以抵御的加工食品的过度泛滥带来了更大的便利和更低的食物成本，但也引发了暴饮暴食，就像如今的生活方式变得更加需要久坐一样。

Once the fat is on, the body fights any attempt to diet away more than a little of its total weight. Despite the \$250bn that consumers around the world spent on dieting and weight loss last year, the battle to get slim was largely being lost.

一旦有了脂肪，身体就会与任何试图减去其总重量的尝试作斗争。尽管去年全世界的消费者在节食和减肥上花费了2500亿美元，但瘦身之战在很大程度上已经失败。

7. The new obesity drugs arrived by serendipity, after treatments meant for diabetics were observed to cause weight loss. Semaglutide mimics the release of hormones that stimulate a feeling of fullness and reduce the appetite. They also switch off the powerful urge to eat that lurks inside the brain, waiting to ambush even the keenest dieter.

新的肥胖症药物的出现是偶然的，因为人们观察到用于糖尿病患者的治疗方法会导致体重下降。塞马鲁肽模拟了饱腹感和减少激发食欲的激素释放。它们还能关闭潜伏在大脑中的强大的进食冲动，即使是最热衷于节食的人，这种冲动也在暗中埋伏。

8. With the jabs already in high demand, investors are nearly as giddy as newly slim users. The market capitalisation of Novo Nordisk, the firm at the front of the gold rush, has doubled in two years, to \$326bn, making it the second-most-valuable listed drugmaker in the world.

由于这种针剂的需求量已经很大，投资者几乎和新的瘦身者一样兴奋。处于淘金热前沿的诺和诺德公司的市值在两年内翻了一番，达到3260亿美元，使其成为世界上价值第二高的上市制药商。

Analysts expect half of obese Americans who seek help to be on GLP-1 drugs by the turn of the decade. But, as with any new medicine that holds so much promise for so many, there are uncertainties. Two big ones will be safety and affordability.

分析师们预计，到本世纪初，寻求帮助的美国肥胖者中有一半人将服用GLP-1药物。但是，与其他对许多人有希望的新药一样，也存在着不确定性。两个大问题是安全性和可负担性。

9. Consider safety first. The newness of these drugs means that their long-term consequences are not yet known. For the lower-dose forms prescribed for diabetes, the side-effects, such as vomiting and diarrhoea, have been mild. But others could crop up as the drugs are used more widely and at higher doses.

首先考虑安全性。这些药物的新颖意味着它们的长期影响尚不清楚。低剂量的糖尿病处方，其副作用，如呕吐和腹泻，一直很温和。但随着这些药物被更广泛地使用和施以更大的剂量，其他的副作用可能会出现。

Animal studies have shown a higher incidence of thyroid cancer, and semaglutide is associated with a rare pancreatitis. Little is known about the effects of using them during or just before pregnancy. All this will require careful analysis through controlled longitudinal studies.

动物研究显示，它们甲状腺癌的发病率较高，而semaglutide与一种罕见的胰腺炎有关。并且，对在怀孕期间或怀孕前使用这些药物的影响知之甚少。所有这些都需要通过精心安排的纵向研究进行仔细分析。

10. Understanding these risks will be important, because many patients who take the drugs may need them for the rest of their lives. As with ditching a diet, stopping a high dose of semaglutide is associated with much of the lost weight piling back on. Some people even gain more weight than they lost in the first place.

了解这些风险将是很重要的，因为许多服用这些药物的病人可能在他们的余生都需要这些药物。就像放弃节食一样，停止服用高剂量的semaglutide会导致体重反弹。有些人反弹的体重甚至比他们当初减掉的还要多。

11. Another preoccupation for policymakers is cost. In America the bill for Wegovy runs at around \$1,300 a month; for Ozempic about \$900. Judged by such prices, lifelong prescriptions look forbiddingly expensive. The longer view, however, is more encouraging. In time, companies may strike deals with governments and health providers to cover the whole population, ensuring high volumes in return for low prices.

政策制定者的另一个关注点是成本。在美国，Wegovy的账单每月约为1300美元；Ozempic的账单约为900美元。从这样的价格来看，终身处方看起来贵得吓人。然而，更长远的迹象则更令人鼓舞。随着时间的推移，医药公司可能会与政府和医疗机构达成协议，让这些处方覆盖整个人口，确保以低价格换取高销量。

The prospect of profits is already luring competition and spurring innovation. Amgen, AstraZeneca and Pfizer are all working on rival drugs; Novo Nordisk has a full pipeline of follow-on drugs. Further ahead still, patents will expire, enabling the development of lower-priced generics.

利润的前景已经在吸引着竞争，刺激着创新。安进(Amgen)、阿斯利康(AstraZeneca)和辉瑞(Pfizer)都在开发对标药物；诺和诺德(Novo Nordisk)有一个完整的后续药物生产线。在更远的未来，药物的专利将会到期，使低价仿制药的开发成为可能。

The shape of things to come

12. What to do in the meantime? Governments must ensure that those who most need the drugs get them, leaving those taking them for cosmetic purposes to pay out of their own pockets.

未来的状况

在此期间应该怎么做？政府必须确保那些最需要这些药物的人得到这些药物，而让那些出于美容目的而服用这些药物的人自掏腰包。

The long-term effects must be carefully studied. States should keep pressing other anti-obesity measures, such as exercise, healthy eating and better food labelling, which may help prevent people from getting fat in the first place. But spare a moment to celebrate, too. These new drugs mean that the world's fight against flab may eventually be won.

还必须仔细研究药物的长期影响。各州应继续推行其他减肥措施，如锻炼、健康饮食和更好的食品标签，这可能在一开始就能防止人们发胖。但是也要花点时间庆祝一下。这些新药物意味着世界上与赘肉的斗争可能最终会取得胜利。