



Weight Loss Drugs for Adults and Criteria

The following drugs are covered by Virginia Premier Health Plan, Inc. for weight loss with **PRIOR** authorization.

1. Orlistat (Xenical)- lipase inhibitor
2. Phentermine Hydrochloride (Fastin, Adipex-P, Ionamin)- sympathomimetics
3. Diethylpropion Hydrochloride (Tenuate)- sympathomimetics

No more than a 30-day supply may be dispensed or prescribed at one time. Only orlistat will be considered for continued prescribing beyond 90 consecutive days.

- Other medications were recently approved by the FDA for weight loss:
 1. [lorcaserin](#) (Belviq) - serotonin 2C agonist - appetite reduction
 2. [phentermine plus extended-release topiramate combination](#) (Qsymia)
 3. Contrave (Bupropion plus Naltrexone)
 4. Saxenda (Liraglutide)

Neither of these medications is covered for weight loss by Virginia Premier Health Plan. Additionally, it should be noted that Amphetamines are NOT COVERED for weight loss

The following criteria must be met and documentation of such must be sent to Virginia Premier when requesting prior-authorization for these drugs.

1. The member must have in the health record a documentation of 6-12 months of a prescribed diet and exercise program that has failed. The nature of the program, reason for failure and monthly weights must be recorded.
2. The member must have a BMI > 30. A BMI > 27 with comorbidities will be considered.
3. A comprehensive history and physical exam must be recorded before the initiation of treatment. It should include an EKG and thyroid function testing. Patients with congestive heart failure, significant cardiovascular disease and uncontrolled hypertension will be excluded from treatment with sympathomimetics. Other contraindications also may exist and will be considered by the reviewer.
4. The use of any medication must be part of a documented comprehensive weight management program, to include a combination of diet modification, increased physical activity, and behavior therapy.

After beginning a drug, monthly blood pressure and weights must be recorded as well as any other tests necessary for monitoring potential adverse effects of drug therapy. All patients on weight loss medication must be reassessed within 30 days of the initiation of their therapy. If they have not lost at least 4.4 pounds (2 kilograms) over their baseline weight, adjustment to dose, alternative medications, or cessation of medication should be strongly considered.

Source:

VA Board of Medicine February 8, 2006

Pharmacologic and surgical management of obesity in primary care: a clinical practice guideline from the American College of Physicians. 2005NHLB1/NIH Obesity and Physical Activity Guideline 1998