



# Ask The Pharmacist

## Tips On Losing Weight Safely

by Paul Reyes, RPh

(NAPSA)—You might dramatically decrease your risk of a number of health ailments by simply losing weight. Yet about two-thirds of the population fall into the overweight or obese categories.

Regular checkups with your doctor are important to monitor and control conditions associated with excessive weight gain. In addition, nurses and pharmacists are good



resources for information about healthy weight management, as well as diseases and conditions associated with weight gain. For instance, Medco now has pharmacists who are trained specifically in diabetes.

**Paul Reyes**

Here are some helpful weight-loss tips:

- **See Your Doctor:** Before starting any weight-loss plan, talk to your doctor about your medical history, including medications you are currently taking. Weight gain can be a side effect of many prescription medications.

- **Know The Facts:** Weight-loss medications are only meant for people with a significant amount of weight to lose and who are at risk for serious health problems.

- **Ask Questions:** Check with your pharmacist or doctor about possible dangers before starting a new treatment.

Here is some information about different types of weight-loss aids:

- **Prescription:** Two common prescription weight-loss medications are Sibutramine and Orlistat. Sibutramine is not for people who have uncontrolled high blood pressure, heart disease or



**It's important to check with a doctor or pharmacist before starting a weight-loss regimen.**

a history of stroke. Orlistat decreases the absorption of fat-soluble vitamins. A daily multivitamin may need to be taken with the drug.

- **Over-The-Counter:** Most over-the-counter diet pills consist of appetite suppressants. However, Alli, the first FDA-approved nonprescription weight-loss drug, is a fat-blocker. It prevents your digestive system from breaking down up to a quarter of the fat you eat.

- **Herbal Remedies:** Certain herbal supplements can have adverse effects ranging from vomiting to life-threatening conditions such as liver or kidney dysfunction. In more than two-thirds of cases, these remedies have never been clinically proven to be effective.

For more information, visit [www.medco.com](http://www.medco.com).

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