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HEALTH

A highly anticipated weight-loss drug helped people lose over 20% of their weight in a late-stage clinical trial, study finds

By [Rachel Hosie](#)



A new drug may help people lose weight. Getty

Jun 6, 2022, 10:03 AM UTC

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- Eli Lilly says its weight-loss drug tirzepatide showed dramatic benefits in a large trial.
- People taking the highest dose while dieting lost 52 pounds on average in 72 weeks, Eli Lilly said.
- Experts said they were impressed by the trial's findings, which were published in the New England Journal of Medicine.

A new weight-loss drug appeared to show dramatic benefits in a large, late-stage trial — a final step before

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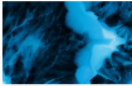
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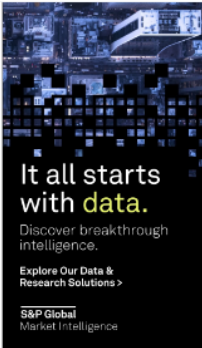
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Study participants who were obese or overweight and took the drug, tirzepatide, lost up to 52 pounds in 72 weeks (roughly 16 months). The manufacturer Eli Lilly and Co. announced the findings in April, and the study has now been published in a peer-reviewed journal.

At the start of the study, the average weight of the 2,539 participants was 231 pounds. By the end, the people taking the highest dose of the drug had an average weight of 179 pounds, the company said.

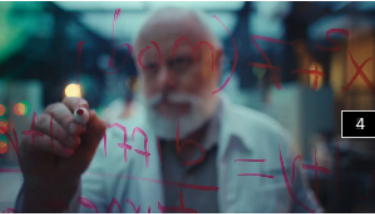
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Experts have expressed surprise at the findings, published in the New England Journal of Medicine on June 4. "Wow (and a double Wow!)," Dr. Sekar Kathiresan, a cardiologist, tweeted when Eli Lilly first announced the results in April.

Market analysts told Reuters the numbers validated the

Kathiresan, a cardiologist, tweeted when Eli Lilly first announced the results in April.

Market analysts told Reuters the numbers validated the buzz around tirzepatide, setting it up to be a "dominant player in the obesity market" with the "potential to be a multibillion-dollar product."

Dr. Lee Kaplan, an obesity expert who consults for pharmaceutical companies including Eli Lilly and was not involved in this study, told The New York Times the results were "very impressive" and the drug "appears to be significantly better than any other anti-obesity medication that is currently available in the US."

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Participants were all obese or overweight and had other health conditions such as high blood pressure, high cholesterol, or cardiovascular disease.

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They were instructed to reduce their calorie intake by 500 a day during the study. A quarter were given a placebo drug, and the rest injected themselves with 5 milligrams, 10 milligrams, or 15 milligrams of

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They were instructed to reduce their calorie intake by 500 a day during the study. A quarter were given a placebo drug, and the rest injected themselves with 5 milligrams, 10 milligrams, or 15 milligrams of tirzepatide once a week.

Those taking the placebo lost an average of 5 pounds (2.4% of their body weight) during the trial, and those taking the highest dose of tirzepatide lost the most — at least 20% of their body weight.

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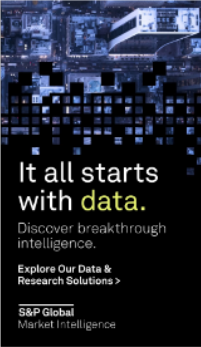
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DAY 16	DAY 17	DAY 18	DAY 19	DAY 20

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'Game changer' weight-loss drug semaglutide was approved in 2021

Tirzepatide's results in the study have impressed experts, but it has yet to be approved.

Last June, the appetite-suppressing drug semaglutide, sold under the brand name Ozempic, was deemed a "game changer" and and approved by the Food and Drug Administration.

The medication was initially developed to treat type 2 diabetes, but it was found to help people lose 15 to 20% of their body weight over 68 weeks.

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