



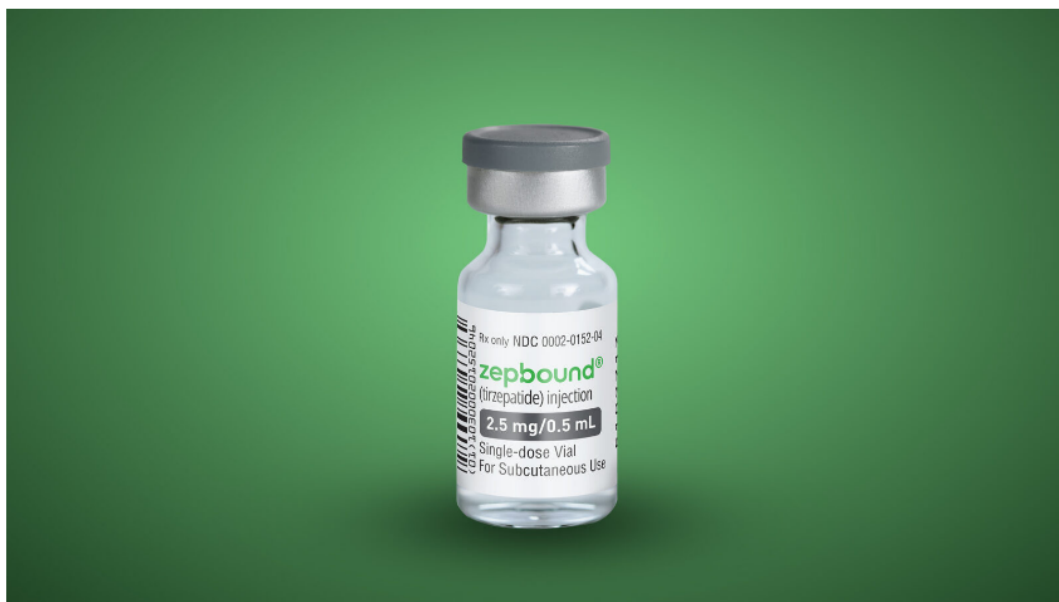
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Eli Lilly's weight loss and diabetes drug tops Keytruda as world's best-selling medicine

The therapy, marketed as Zepbound and Mounjaro, took the crown from Merck at a striking pace



STAT; Handout: Courtesy Eli Lilly

By **Elaine Chen** Oct. 30, 2025

National Biotech Reporter

Merck, which has claimed bragging rights as the maker of the world's best-selling drug, Keytruda, since 2023, has officially been surpassed by Eli Lilly.

Lilly's tirzepatide, marketed as Mounjaro for type 2 diabetes and Zepbound for obesity, saw \$10.1 billion in sales in the third quarter, the pharma giant said Thursday, bringing year-to-date sales of the product to \$24.8 billion.

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Measure serum potassium periodically.

Merck, meanwhile, reported that Keytruda, a cancer immunotherapy, earned \$8.1 billion in the third quarter, bringing year-to-date sales to \$23.3 billion.

Tirzepatide took the crown at a striking pace — it was only approved for diabetes in 2022 and for obesity last year. In comparison, Keytruda became the best-selling drug nine years after it was first approved.

Analysts polled by Visible Alpha currently predict that for the full year, tirzepatide will bring in \$32.2 billion, while Keytruda will bring in \$31.8 billion.

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The rapid passing of the torch underlines the immense demand for GLP-1-based drugs and the fierceness of the competition in the market. Even though Novo Nordisk was earlier to market with its highly effective drugs, Ozempic and Wegovy, Lilly is now widely seen as having surpassed Novo with a drug that can lead to even greater weight loss.

The intensity of competition in the obesity market was on full display Thursday, as Novo announced a takeover bid of biotech Metsera, which just a month ago said it would enter an acquisition deal with Pfizer.

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When reporting earnings Thursday, Lilly said it brought in total revenue of \$17.6 billion in the third quarter, greater than the \$16.1 billion predicted by analysts.

The company also said it's raising its guidance for full-year sales to the range of \$63 to \$63.5 billion, from a range of \$60 to \$62 billion and its guidance for adjusted earnings per share to a range of



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Clarification: An earlier version of this story stated sales of Eli Lilly's tirzepatide had surpassed sales of Merck's Keytruda on a quarterly basis. It was the second consecutive time it had done so. Tirzepatide sales have now surpassed Keytruda on a year-to-date basis.

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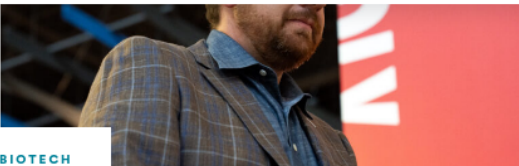
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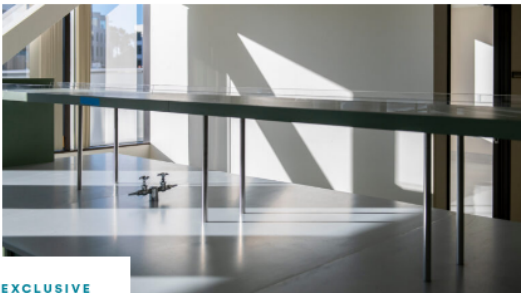
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