

Reasons why certain diet pills may not be suitable for you:

Methylcellulose

- ◆ Not suitable if you have difficulty swallowing, or if you have a blockage in your bowel.

Orlistat

- ◆ This pill would not be a sensible option for you if you eat lots of fatty foods and find it hard to stick to a low-fat diet.

Sibutramine

- ◆ Not recommended if you have heart problems, or take antidepressant medication.

Rimonabant

- ◆ Not suitable if you have a history of depression, as this diet pill can make the problem worse.



How long would I need to take diet pills for?

If you and your Doctor agree that diet pills are the best option for you, you will need to agree targets for:

- ◆ weight loss;
- ◆ the length of time you take the pills.



You cannot stay on diet pills for a very long time. This is because we still don't know much about what happens when people take diet pills for more than 1 to 2 years. There could be problems that we don't know about yet.

Things to consider before you decide to take diet pills:

- ◆ Diet pills are not an "easy option" - you will still need to watch what you eat and take regular exercise.
- ◆ All diet pills can cause side effects.
- ◆ The amount of weight you can expect to lose may be quite small.
- ◆ Some diet pills may not be suitable for you, (see blue panel to the left).
- ◆ Your physical health may be at risk if you do not lose weight.

Diet Pills: Your questions answered.



This leaflet explains whether diet pills might be an option for you and how they work.

It also explains the common side effects that diet pills can cause.

Who are diet pills suitable for?

Your body mass index, known as your **BMI**, is a way of working out how much you should weigh for your height. It is worked out by dividing your weight in kilograms by your height in square metres.

Your BMI is healthy if it is 20 to 25. You are classed as overweight if your BMI is over 25 and obese if your BMI is over 30.

Diet pills **may** be an option for you if:

- ◆ Your body mass index (BMI) is **30** or more.
- ◆ Your BMI is **27** or more and you have **high blood sugar** or **heart problems**.

How much weight could diet pills help me lose?

The amount of weight you lose can be quite small. Based on what we know about diet pills, you may expect to lose between 3 to 5 kgs, which is about 6 to 11 lb. The amount you lose will also depend on your **diet** and the amount of **exercise** you take.

Are diet pills safe?

All diet pills have **side effects**. These are described on the back of this leaflet. We still don't know much about what happens when people take diet pills for more than 1 to 2 years. There could be problems that we don't know about yet.

How do diet pills work?

This table explains how different diet pills work. It also tells you which side effects these pills can cause.

Name of diet pill	How it works	Common side effects
Methylcellulose	Swells up inside your stomach, which should make you feel full.	Feeling bloated.
Orlistat	Cuts down the amount of fat your body gets from food.	1 in 4 people who take this medicine feel bloated and have diarrhoea. The more fat you eat, the worse these problems get. This medicine can reduce the amount of good fats (HDL cholesterol) and vitamins that you get from your food. It can also prevent your body from absorbing some medicines properly.
Sibutramine	Increases chemicals (called "monoamines") in the brain that help reduce your appetite.	Can increase your blood pressure, so this needs to be checked regularly if you take this medicine. Can cause sleep problems and constipation.
Rimonabant	Blocks the effect of substances (called "endocannabinoids") in the brain that increase your appetite.	May cause: stomach upsets, irritability, memory problems, difficulty getting to sleep and hallucinations.



The pills described in this table are not suitable for everybody. Reasons why some of these pills may not be suitable for you are explained on the next page of this leaflet.

Diet pills are not a miracle cure. They can only work if watch what you eat and take regular exercise.

For healthy eating tips and advice, visit: www.eatwell.gov.uk

