WEST VIRGINIA BUREAU OF SENIOR SERVICES

Food and Fitness

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New Medicare Weight Loss Demonstration Program Now Available

By Rebecca Gouty, SHIP/SMP State Director, WV Bureau of Senior Services

Did you know there is a new Medicare weight loss demonstration program available that may benefit you? Medicare prescription drug coverage is currently not allowed to cover medications that are used solely for weight loss. However, losing weight can have a significant impact on your health. Medicare has created a pilot program, or demonstration, called the GLP-1 Bridge program, available between July 1, 2026, and December 31, 2027, that allows certain weight loss medications to be available at a lower cost to Medicare beneficiaries. GLP-1 medications are prescriptions that can help lower blood sugar, promote weight loss, and manage other health conditions.

There are some eligibility requirements to be able to participate in the GLP-1 Bridge demonstration program. First, you must have Medicare prescription drug coverage. This can be either a stand-alone prescription drug plan or a Medicare Advantage plan that includes prescription drug coverage. This includes some retiree-offered Medicare plans that include drug coverage (such as PEIA Humana). Second, if you are eligible to receive GLP-1 drugs through your Medicare prescription drug coverage, you cannot participate in the GLP-1 Bridge program. You need to either continue to or work with your plan for coverage of these types of medicines. This includes

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if you have type 2 diabetes, moderate-to-severe sleep apnea, or fatty liver disease (MASH). Third, you must meet certain medical criteria to be eligible, which includes being 18 years old or older and meeting one of the following:

- You have a Body Mass Index (BMI) of 35 or higher
- Your BMI is 30 or higher, and you have certain types of heart failure OR high blood pressure that's hard to control OR chronic kidney disease (stage 3a or above)
- Your BMI is 27 or higher, and you have prediabetes OR you've had a heart attack, stroke or blocked arteries in your legs or arms

You may still be eligible even if your BMI no longer meets the criteria because you started using a GLP-1 previously with a BMI that was in an eligible range and have since lost weight.

If you think you may benefit from participating in the GLP-1 Bridge program, speak with your doctor to see if a GLP-1 medicine would be right for you and whether you meet the eligibility criteria. You can only receive certain GLP-1 medicines through the program: Foundayo tablets, Wegovy injection or tablets, and Zepbound Kwikpen only (single dose Zepbound pens and vials are not covered; pen needles are also not covered under the program and would be a separate cost).

If your doctor feels you would benefit and determines you meet the medical criteria, they will send a prescription to your pharmacy indicating it should be billed to the GLP-1 Bridge program. Your pharmacy will need your Medicare number, if they do not have it already, to bill the medication to Medicare. Make sure to provide your Medicare number directly to your pharmacy only. Always be careful of unsolicited callers asking for your Medicare number as these could be scammers. Once your pharmacy submits the prescription to the GLP-1 Bridge program, your doctor will get a Prior Authorization request from Medicare. Once they complete the request and Medicare has reviewed it (typically within 72 hours), a determination will be made of whether you are eligible. If approved, you will be able to get the GLP-1 medication at $50 for a monthly supply, regardless of income level. The program does not allow you to get a 90-day supply. You only need to get one approval even if your dosage changes. The medicine is not billed to your prescription drug coverage and therefore does not apply to any deductible or out-of-pocket maximum with your drug coverage. You will receive a letter from Medicare letting you know that you have been approved. Do not pay out-of-pocket prior to approval, as you will not be reimbursed.

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Have additional questions about the GLP-1 Bridge program or Medicare in general? Contact WV SHIP at 1-877-987-4463, or contact your local Senior Center or Aging and Disability Resource Center for more assistance. You may also visit https://www.medicare.gov/coverage/weight-loss-drugs for more information about the GLP-1 Bridge program.

Herbs and Spices—Lemon Balm

Lemon balm is a leafy herb in the mint family with a light lemon scent and taste. It has been used in cooking for hundreds of years and is easy to grow in a garden or a pot. Fresh or dried leaves add flavor to foods without adding extra salt, sugar, or fat.

Lemon balm is low in calories but contains small amounts of vitamin C, calcium, potassium, and iron. It also has antioxidants that help protect your body's cells. While it is not a major source of nutrients, it is a healthy way to add flavor to meals.

You can enjoy lemon balm in many foods and drinks. Add fresh leaves to fruit salad, green salads, yogurt, cottage cheese, or fish and chicken dishes. It also makes a refreshing herbal tea and can be added to lemonade, smoothies, or water for a fresh lemon flavor.

Using herbs like lemon balm is a simple way to make healthy foods taste better. It adds fresh flavor to fruits, vegetables, whole grains, and lean proteins, making nutritious meals more enjoyable for people of all ages.

Lemon Balm

A CALMING HERB WITH DELICIOUS BENEFITS

What is Lemon Balm?

Lemon balm (Melissa officinalis) is a fragrant herb from the mint family. It has soft, lemon-scented leaves and a mild, refreshing flavor. It has been used for hundreds of years in food and natural healing.

Nutrition Highlights

Lemon balm is low in calories and packed with plant goodness!

- Rich in **antioxidants** – helps protect cells from damage
- Good source of **vitamin C** – supports immune health
- Contains small amounts of **B vitamins**, calcium, iron, and magnesium
- Naturally caffeine-free
- Hydrating and soothing

Ways to Enjoy Lemon Balm

- **Teas:** Steep fresh or dried leaves in hot water for a relaxing, lemony tea.
- **Flavor booster:** Add chopped leaves to salads, fruit, yogurt, or soup.
- **Infuse it:** Add leaves to water, lemonade, or iced tea for a fresh twist.
- **Blend it:** Use in smoothies or with other herbs like mint or basil.
- **Bake with it:** Great in cookies, muffins, or shortbread for a light lemon flavor.

Did You Know?

The name "Melissa" comes from a Greek word that means "honey bee." Bees love lemon balm!

Benefits for Older Adults

- May help reduce stress and promote better sleep
- Supports a positive mood and mental well-being
- Gentle on the stomach
- Easy to grow and use at home
- Naturally supports heart and immune health

Healthy Tip

Try replacing sugary drinks with lemon balm tea or infused water. Your body (and mind) will thank you!

Simple Lemon Balm Tea

1. Add 1 tablespoon of fresh (or 1 teaspoon dried) lemon balm leaves to a cup.
2. Pour in hot water.
3. Steep for 5–10 minutes.
4. Strain and enjoy! Add a slice of lemon or a little honey if you like.

Easy to Grow!

Lemon balm grows well in pots or gardens. It likes sun or part shade and regular watering.

Fresh flavor is just a leaf away!

Simple. Soothing. Delicious. Lemon balm is a tasty way to support your health—naturally!

Recipe—Lemon Balm Tea

Ingredients

- 20 fresh lemon balm leaves
- Lemon slices for garnish
- Honey to taste, optional

Instructions

1. Bring 1-quart purified water to boil.
2. Put lemon balm leaves in a tea pot.
3. Pour the water over the lemon balm leaves, stir, and let steep for 10 minutes.
4. Pour or strain into your teacup or mug. Add honey to taste. Garnish with a slice of lemon and a lemon balm leaf or two.

Recipe received from: https://theviewfromgreatisland.com/how-to-make-lemon-balm-tea/#wprm-recipe-container-155108

Brain Exercise

Don’t Just Exercise Your Body — Work Out Your Brain!

The Odyssey

Word Search

DIRECTIONS: Find and circle the vocabulary words in the grid.
Look for them in all directions including backwards and diagonally.

M	B	W	N	A	A	W	U	B	R	Q	N	A	L	A	B	K	T	K	M	Q
A	J	S	A	D	M	N	A	H	O	N	Q	O	R	L	F	D	Y	T	U	N
B	L	J	T	V	E	N	Z	D	W	S	E	P	O	L	C	Y	C	P	C	L
K	N	S	J	O	T	R	Y	H	K	M	E	O	M	Y	S	X	K	H	J	H
D	T	L	I	I	V	S	G	V	O	E	E	N	X	C	B	B	A	S	M	B
Y	N	E	N	R	S	V	C	O	Q	M	M	Y	E	S	T	R	P	O	S	J
V	X	O	Z	E	E	T	A	Y	D	S	E	T	G	H	Y	V	O	D	U	K
G	U	G	Y	R	D	N	E	J	N	S	N	R	Z	B	X	X	N	Y	X	D
S	T	E	M	P	T	A	T	I	O	N	K	G	D	L	E	J	H	S	A	B
Q	R	V	U	V	W	J	A	C	A	H	T	I	I	O	O	C	U	S	E	Y
M	E	O	P	C	I	P	E	U	Y	U	S	O	S	T	U	E	W	E	R	I
T	T	S	E	P	U	W	D	N	R	F	Y	W	G	U	Z	M	O	U	U	M
E	S	R	V	K	U	U	E	N	A	E	O	L	U	S	Y	S	F	S	T	A
L	S	N	O	D	N	O	D	I	E	S	O	P	I	E	U	E	J	G	N	P
E	E	K	S	J	D	R	L	N	S	M	J	K	S	A	A	J	O	E	E	E
M	D	M	P	K	A	D	V	G	C	B	R	O	E	T	H	V	H	E	V	N
A	D	R	Y	E	Y	N	W	X	V	V	Y	B	U	E	A	T	G	U	D	E
C	O	F	L	E	I	J	W	J	Y	G	T	O	V	R	A	J	Z	Y	A	L
H	G	V	A	R	E	X	U	A	J	K	I	P	A	S	N	S	X	J	G	O
U	X	E	C	G	L	O	V	R	R	L	X	U	G	S	H	E	O	C	P	P
S	J	R	A	H	O	S	L	J	E	H	Z	Q	U	F	K	Q	Y	E	O	E

ADVENTURE
AEOLUS
ANTINOUS
ATHENA
CALYPSO
CHARYBDIS
CUNNING
CYCLOPES
DISGUISE
EPIC POEM
GODDESS
GODS
GREEK
HOMER
ITHACA
JOURNEY
LOTUS EATERS
ODYSSEUS
ODYSSEY
PENELOPE
POSEIDON
SCYLLA
SIREN
TELEMACHUS
TEMPTATION
TROJAN WAR
ZEUS

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August 2026

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
						1 Campfire Day
2 Ice Cream Sandwich Day	3 National Watermelon Day	4 U.S. Coast Guard Day	5 Underwear Day	6 National Fresh Breath Day	7 National Purple Heart Day	8 National Garage Sale Day
9 Book Lover's Day	10 Lazy Day	11 Son and Daughter Day	12 National Vinal Record Day	13 Left Hander's Day	14 National Creamsicle Day	15 Tomatoes Galore Day
16 Tell a Joke Day	17 Neighbor Night	18 National Fajita Day	19 National Potato Day	20 National Radio Day	21 Senior Citizen's Day	22 Be an Angel Day
23 Ride the Wind Day	24 National Waffle Day	25 National Banana Split Day	26 National Dog Day	27 Just Because Day	28 National Cherry Turnover Day	29 More Herbs, Less Salt Day
30 National Beach Day	31 National Eat Outside Day					

MONTHLY OBSERVATIONS

Family Fun Month

Golf Month

International Pirate Month

National Catfish Month

National Eye Exam Month

Peach Month

Picnic Month

Romance Awareness Month

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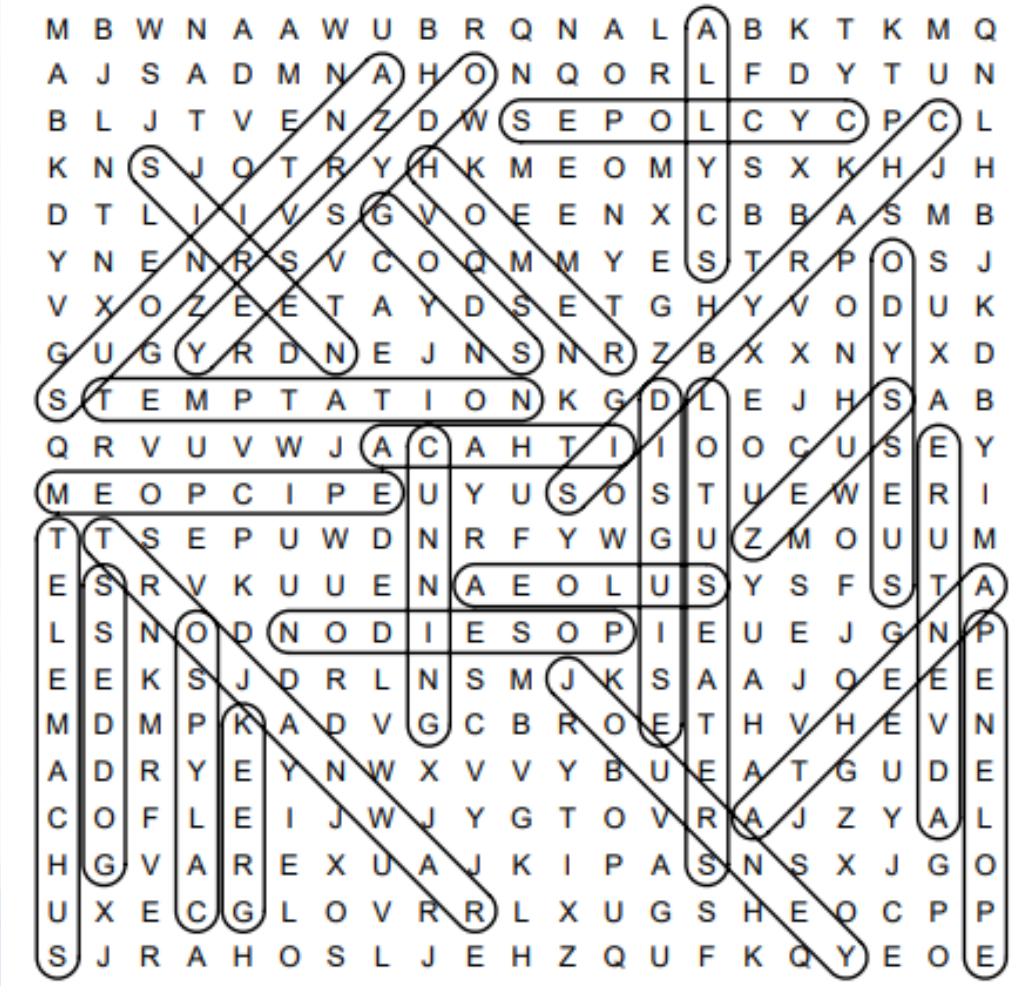
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