



# What's New with IBD, Weight Management and Weight Loss Medications

Elyse Johnston, MD

Therezia Alchoufete, MS RD LDN

Randall (RJ) Bendis, PharmD PhD

# Obesity in IBD

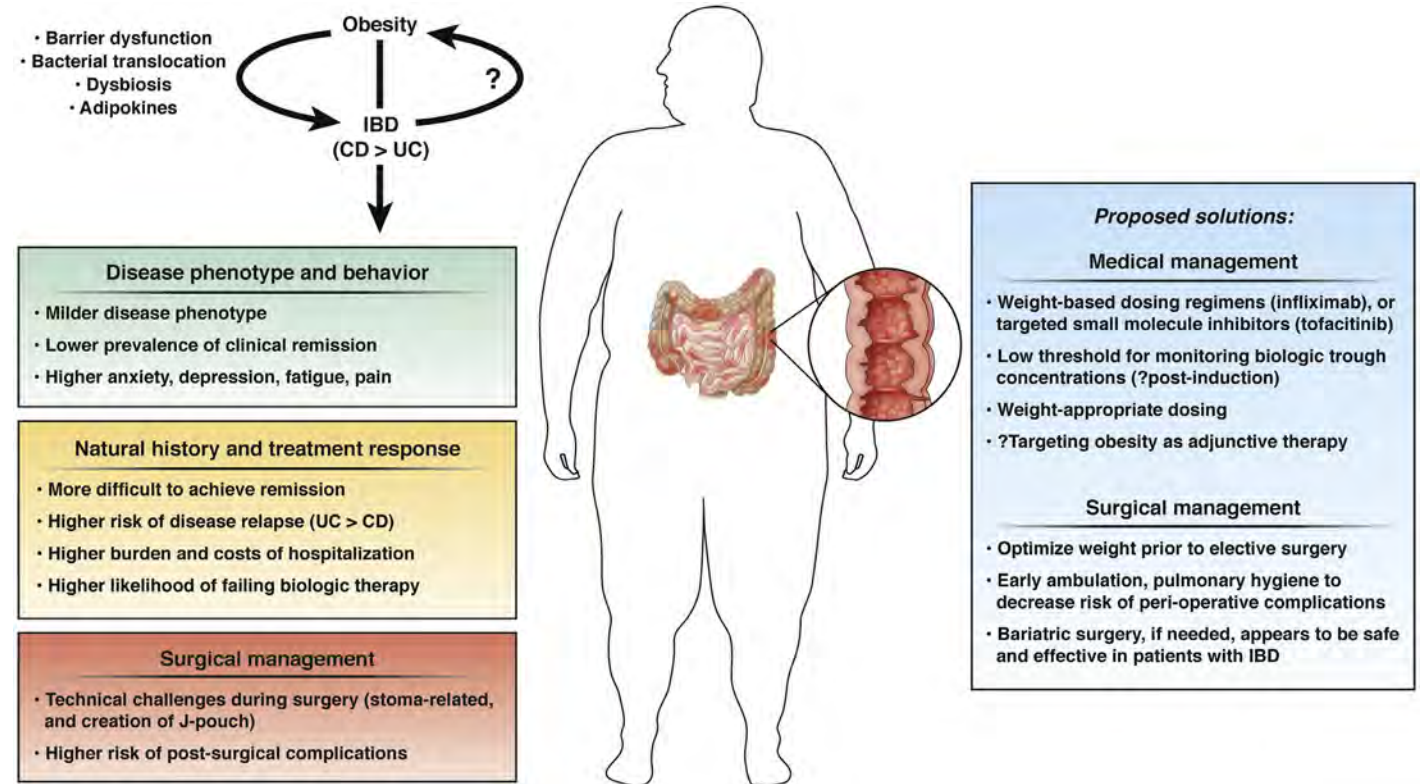
Very Prevalent - Adult IBD patients: 15-40% obese (BMI  $\geq 30$ ) and 20-40% overweight (25-30)

Obesity = chronic low-grade inflammation

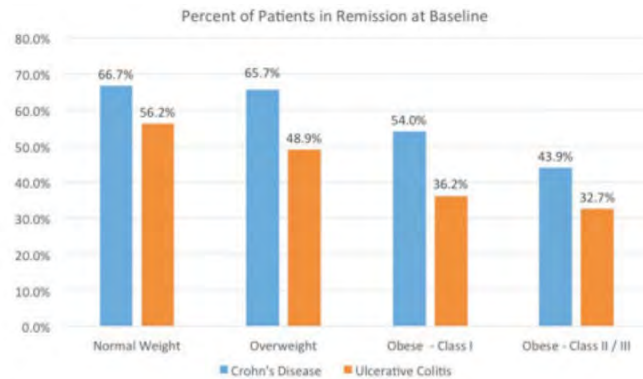
VAT not BMI

Possible role in IBD development

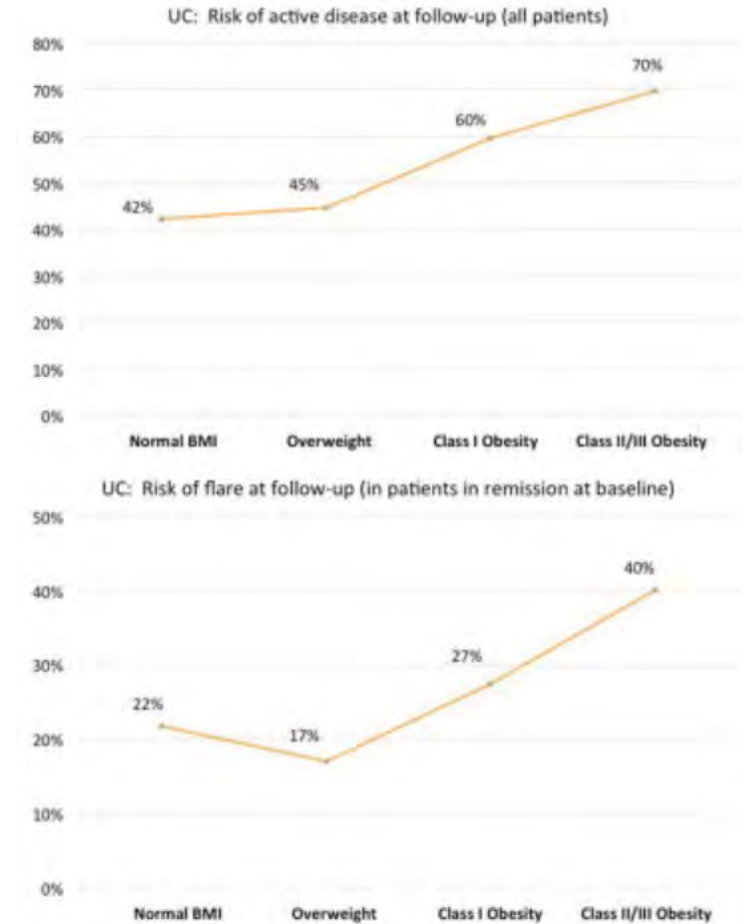
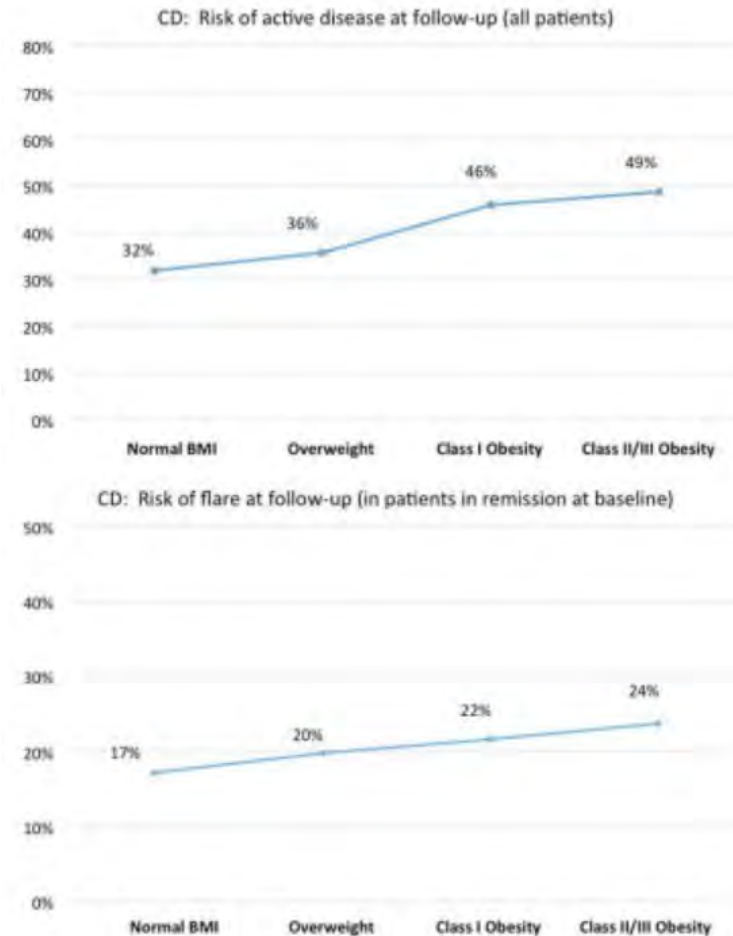
Varying data on disease phenotype severity



# Obesity



**Figure 1.**  
Proportion of patients in clinical remission at baseline, based on body mass index





# GLP-1 Medications in IBD

- Not a lot of data
- No signal for IBD exacerbation
- Could ↓ obesity improve IBD outcome ??
- My approach

# Weight Loss Medications

Medication Name (Generic/Brand)	Potential Side Effects
Metformin / <b>Glucophage</b>	<b>Diarrhea</b> , nausea, passing gas, vomiting, abdominal pain
Orlistat / <b>Xenical</b> or <b>Alli</b>	<b>Abdominal pain, bowel urgency, stool leakage</b> , headache, passing gas
Phentermine and Topiramate / <b>Qsymia</b>	<b>Increased heart rate and blood pressure</b> , constipation, headache, sleep issues
Naltrexone and Bupropion / <b>Contrave</b>	<b>Nausea, constipation</b> , sleep issues, headache, <b>vomiting</b>
Liraglutide / <b>Saxenda</b> Semaglutide / <b>Wegovy</b>	<b>GLP-1 Medications</b>
Tirzepatide / <b>Zepbound</b>	Same as GLP-1 agents above + risk of <b>low blood sugar</b>

	DOSE	DOSE FORM	SUITABLE FOR LONG-TERM USE	EFFICACY*	COVERED BY INSURANCE**	COVERED BY MEDICARE**
Metformin***	1-2 DAILY		YES	/	99%	100%
Contrave (NALTREXONE/BUPROPION)	2 DAILY		YES	/	11%	0%
Phentermine (ADIPEX-P)	1-3 DAILY		NO	/	47%	0%
Diethylpropion	1-3 DAILY		NO	/	43%	0%
Qsymia (PHENTERMINE/TOPIRAMATE ER)	1 DAILY		YES	7	23%	0%
Saxenda (LIRAGLUTIDE)	1 DAILY		YES	7	16%	0%
Wegovy (SEMAGLUTIDE)	1 WEEKLY		YES	⚡	20%	0%
Tirzepatide*** (MOUNJARO)	1 WEEKLY		YES	⚡	13%	43%

1. Palmer C and Aungst C. From GoodRx (2023, November 28). Can tirzepatide help you lose weight? <https://www.goodrx.com/conditions/weight-loss/tirzepatide-and-weight-loss>

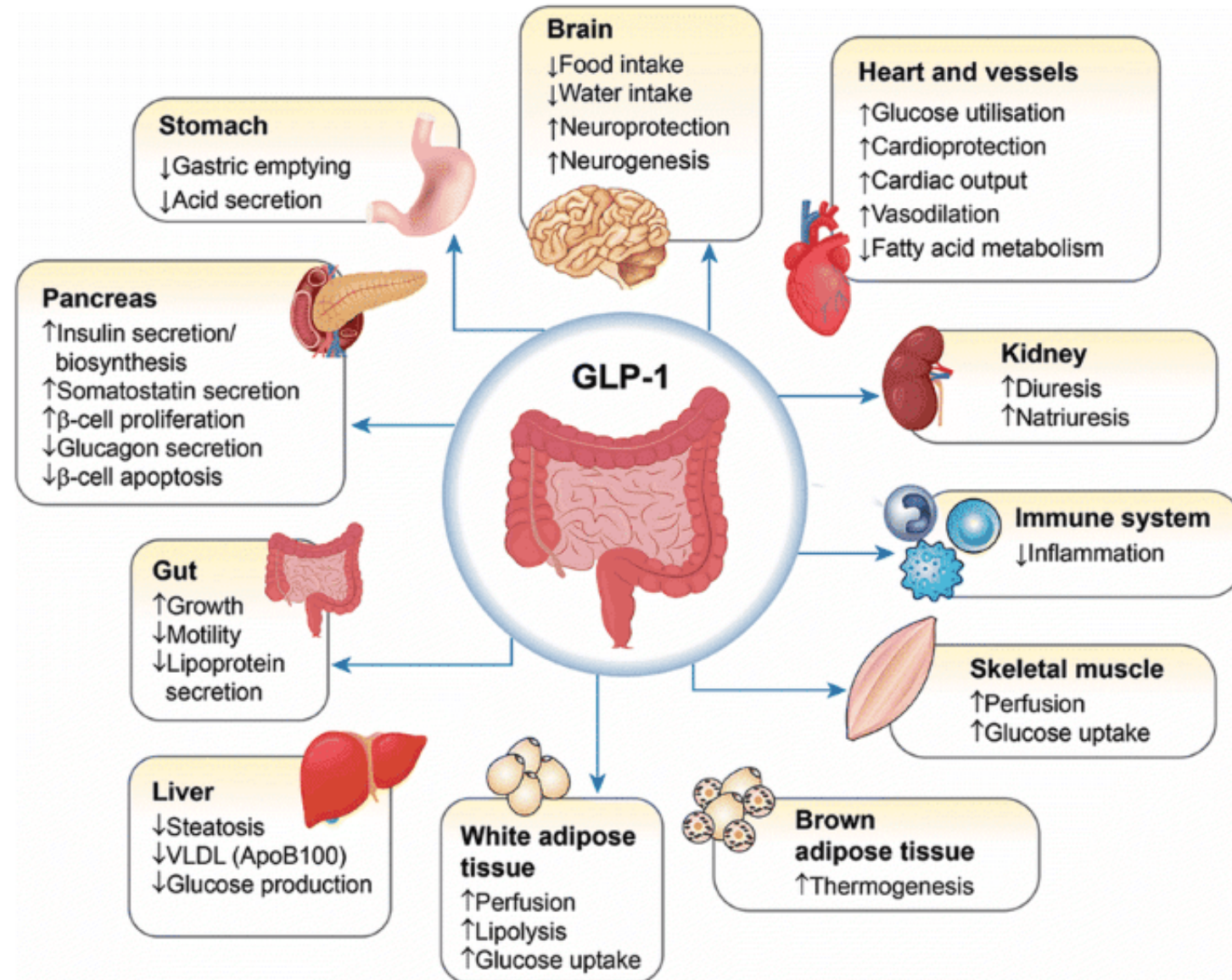
2. Lexi-Drugs, UpToDate Lexidrug. UpToDate Inc. <https://online.lexi.com>. Accessed March 2, 2025.

# What GLP-1 medications are on the market and what are they used for?

Generic Name	Brand Name	Dosage Form	Dosing Schedule	Indication For Use	FDA Approval
Liraglutide	Victoza®	Injection	Daily	Type 2 Diabetes	2010
Liraglutide	Saxenda®	Injection	Daily	Weight loss	2014
Dulaglutide	Trulicity®	Injection	Weekly	Type 2 Diabetes	2014
Semaglutide	Ozempic®	Injection	Weekly	Type 2 Diabetes	2017
Semaglutide	Rybelsus®	Oral	Daily	Type 2 Diabetes	2019
Semaglutide	Wegovy®	Injection	Weekly	Weight Loss	2022
Tirzepatide	Mounjaro®	Injection	Weekly	Type 2 Diabetes	2022
Tirzepatide	Zepbound®	Injection	Weekly	Weight loss	2023
Retatrutide	TBD	Injection	Weekly	Weight loss	TBD
Orforglipron	TBD	Oral	Daily	Weight loss	TBD

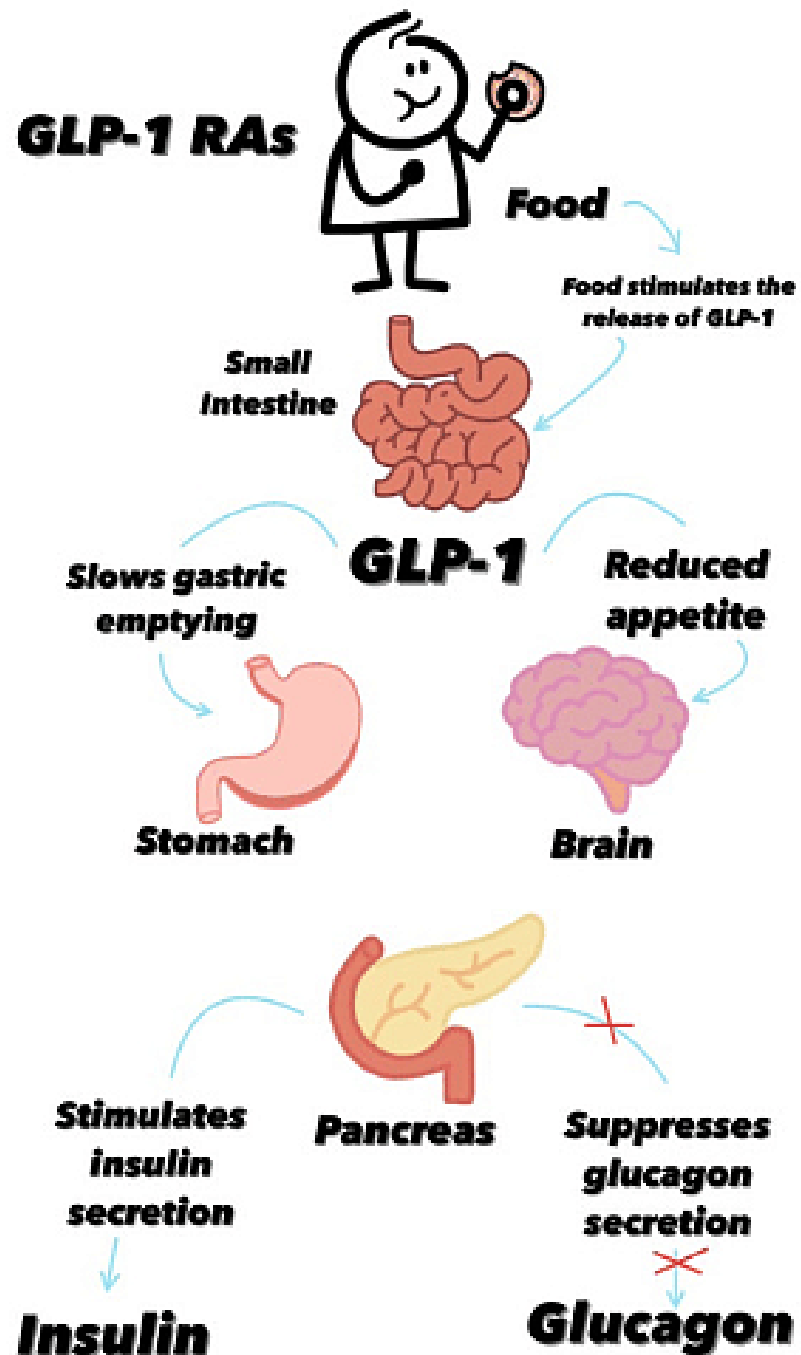
# What are GLP-1 medications?

- **Glucagon-like peptide-1 receptor agonists**
- **Mechanism of action:**
  - Binds to and activates the **GLP-1 receptor**
  - **GLP-1**: hormone that plays a key role in **blood glucose control**
- When activated this causes:
  - Slowed gastric emptying
  - Increased insulin production
  - Reduced food intake
  - Many other systemic effects





# How GLP-1 medications work



## GLP-1



INSULIN  
REGULATION



BLOOD SUGAR  
CONTROL



APPETITE  
SUPPRESSION



WEIGHT  
MANAGEMENT



CARDIOVASCULAR  
HEALTH

Blood Sugar



Appetite/Weight



1.

Muskiet MHA, Tonneijck L, Smits MM, et al. GLP-1 and the Kidney: From Physiology to Pharmacy and Outcomes in Diabetes. *Nat Rev Nephrol.* 2017;13(10):605-628.



# Possible side effects of GLP-1 medications

## Common

- Nausea (15-45%)
- Vomiting (5-25%)
- Diarrhea (10-30%)
- Constipation (3-24%)
- Abdominal pain (6-20%)
- Headache (14-17%)



**Note:** most side effects are mild and improve as your body gets used to the medication

These side effects are more common with **higher doses of the medication** and **when starting treatment**

## Rare to very rare

- Low blood sugar (2-6%)
- Gallbladder issues (1-4%)
- Pancreatitis (inflammation of the pancreas) (less than 1%)
- Intestinal obstruction (less than 1%)
- Allergic reactions (not defined)
- Increased risk of certain cancers

**Avoid use** if there is a personal or family history of **medullary thyroid carcinoma (MTC)** or in patients with **multiple endocrine neoplasia syndrome type 2 (MEN2)**

# Strategies to Minimize GLP-1 RA Side Effects



Smaller, more frequent meals



Separate fluids from foods, take small sips



Decrease high fat meals



Choose well balanced meals containing fiber



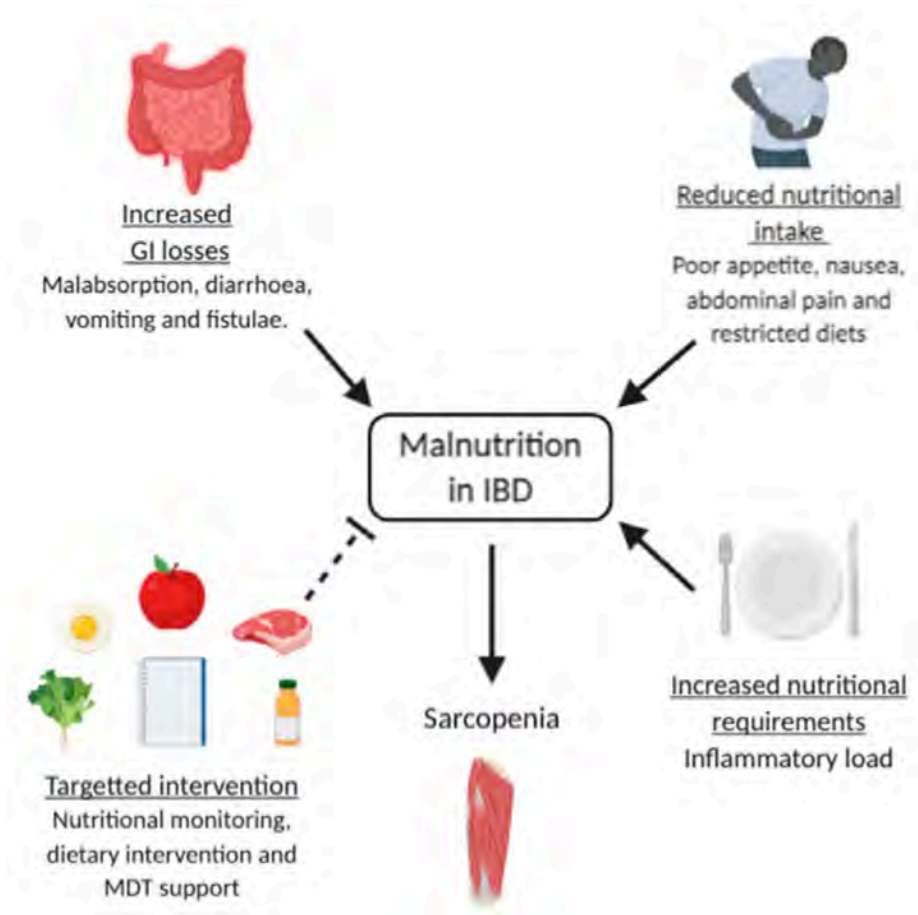
Avoid eating close to bedtime



Physical activity as tolerated

1. Gorgojo-Martínez JJ, Mezquita-Raya P, Carretero-Gómez J, et al. Clinical Recommendations to Manage Gastrointestinal Adverse Events in Patients Treated with Glp-1 Receptor Agonists: A Multidisciplinary Expert Consensus. *J Clin Med*. 2022;12(1):145. Published 2022 Dec 24. doi:10.3390/jcm12010145

# Sarcopenia and IBD



Dhaliwal A, et al. *Nutrients*. 2021

BMI>25 can still be malnourished

19% of patients with sarcopenia and IBD have a BMI >25 and 41% have a normal BMI

1. Dhaliwal A, Quinlan JI, Overthrow K, et al. Sarcopenia in Inflammatory Bowel Disease: A Narrative Overview. *Nutrients*. 2021;13(2):656. Published 2021 Feb 17. doi:10.3390/nu13020656
2. Adams DW, Gurwara S, Silver HJ, et al. Sarcopenia Is Common in Overweight Patients with Inflammatory Bowel Disease and May Predict Need for Surgery. *Inflamm Bowel Dis*. 2017;23(7):1182-1186. doi:10.1097/MIB.0000000000001128



# Preserve Muscle Mass

- Adequate protein – lean protein sources such as chicken, turkey, fish
- Resistance training – body weight exercise, weight-lifting as tolerated

