

Orlistat Frequently Asked Questions

(Patient information)

These FAQs can be used to answer questions about orlistat no longer being prescribed.

Why can I no longer have orlistat prescribed?

Orlistat is a medicine that reduces the absorption of dietary fat. There is only a small amount of evidence from clinical trials to support its use and this must be weighed against its potential for side-effects. It has been prescribed in NHS Highland, but it is not a replacement for changes to diet and physical activity. It is not a long-term solution in weight management, and its use has always been time-limited.

We have found that many patients take orlistat to fit their eating habits rather than the other way round because of the side-effects, ie if they are planning to have a high fat meal, they don't take orlistat. It is our intention to support people to change their behaviours around food and eating. This is more effective and acknowledges that high fat foods and meals are part of life.

I'll put on loads of weight without it

This is unlikely; the majority of people who eat to appetite will have a stable weight. Orlistat does not support people to eat to appetite.

But I've taken it for years and it works

It should not have been prescribed on such a long term basis. If people are taking orlistat and have no side-effects, they must have changed what they eat over the long term.

Where can I get help then?

Information for weight management and NHS Highland courses can be found on the website:

<http://www.nhshighland.scot.nhs.uk/YourHealth/Pages/HealthyWeight.aspx>

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