



Mount  
Sinai  
South  
Nassau

Winter 2024

# Healthy Outlook

a health and wellness newsletter

## Are Weight Loss Drugs Right For Me?



Is keeping your weight in check a challenge? There are many new prescription injectable obesity drugs on the market, including Wegovy®, Ozempic®, Zepbound™, or Mounjaro™, that can help some shed extra weight.

But experts warn they are not the right answer for everyone.

"Patients are eligible for these medications if they are clinically obese (with a body mass index of 30 or higher), or have a BMI equal or greater than 27 and a weight-related health condition, such as diabetes or high blood pressure," said Effie Tsomos, MD, Chief of the Division of Endocrinology and Medical Director of the Center for Weight Loss and Metabolic Life at Mount Sinai South Nassau. "And they are designed to work in tandem with lifestyle modifications like dietary changes and exercise."

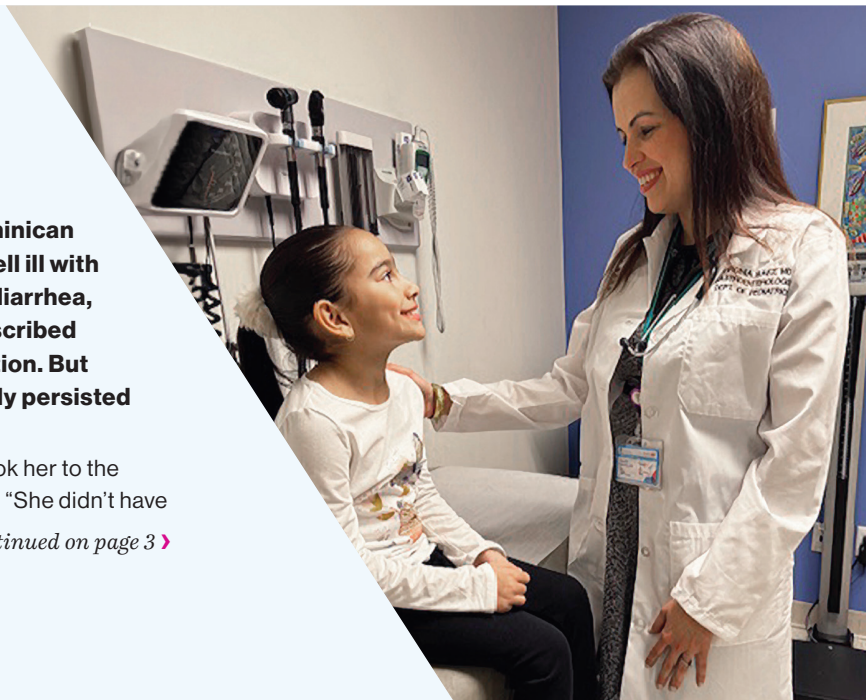
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## Diagnosing Digestive Disorders in Children

Four days after returning from a family trip to the Dominican Republic last August, nine-year-old Breanna Fabian fell ill with bloody diarrhea. A pediatrician diagnosed traveler's diarrhea, obtained a stool sample to test for parasites, and prescribed a medication to treat what was thought to be an infection. But after four days on the medication, the diarrhea not only persisted but worsened.

"She was having bloody diarrhea 15 or 20 times a day, so I took her to the Emergency Room," said Brunilda Collado, Breanna's mother. "She didn't have

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## › Weight-Loss Drugs

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The medications, which come in a pre-filled pen that a patient injects under the skin once weekly, work by mimicking hormones that increase insulin production to lower blood sugar levels and decrease appetite by slowing down the digestive process. This gives you a feeling of fullness and turns down your appetite.

“*Patients are eligible for these medications if they have a body mass index of 30 or higher, or a BMI equal or greater than 27 and a weight-related health condition, such as diabetes or high blood pressure.*”

– **Effie Tsomos, MD,**  
Chief of the Division of Endocrinology at  
Mount Sinai South Nassau

While the drugs are approved by the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) and deemed effective—helping some patients reduce body weight by up to 25 percent. But they can have side effects, such as nausea, vomiting, constipation, and diarrhea, which can be treated with over-the-counter medications, Dr. Tsomos said.

Experts question the long-term health effects of some weight loss drugs. Recent studies have found a link between Ozempic and intestinal blockage, pancreatitis, and suicidal behavior. Some patients also

report putting the weight back on once they stop using the medications.

Cost could be an issue as well. If your insurance does not cover the drug, could cost you nearly \$15,000.

With the popularity of these drugs soaring, many weight loss medications are in short supply. Some are turning to less expensive compounding pharmacies that produce drugs that are not FDA approved. Patients are advised to avoid illicit drugs that are sold without a prescription.

And not everyone is a candidate for these medications. If you are pregnant or planning to become pregnant, under the age of 18, have a personal or family history of certain endocrine or thyroid tumors, gall bladder disease, and pancreatitis, weight loss drugs are not recommended.

Experts caution that the effects of weight loss will only last as long as you take the drugs. Once you stop, you are likely to regain nearly two-thirds of the weight—unless you have adopted lifestyle changes like healthy eating habits and regular physical activity, according to Dr. Tsomos.

“I want my patients to get healthier, not just thinner,” she said. “It is important that you speak to your health care professional who knows your personal and family medical history and can guide you in the best treatment for your condition.” ■

**TO SCHEDULE AN APPOINTMENT,** call  
877-SOUTH-NASSAU (877-768-8462).



### About the Doctor



**Effie Tsomos, MD,** is Chief of the Division of Endocrinology and Medical Director of the Center for Weight Loss and Metabolic Life at Mount Sinai South Nassau. She is board certified in internal medicine and specializes in endocrinology, diabetes, metabolism, obesity medicine, and adrenal disease.

Dr. Tsomos earned a medical degree from Boston University School of Medicine and completed a residency in internal medicine at Montefiore Medical Center in the Bronx. She was

fellowship trained in endocrinology at the Icahn School of Medicine at Mount Sinai.

## Buy a Brick in the Health Care Heroes Plaza

Support Mount Sinai South Nassau and create a lasting legacy for your family and loved ones in the new Health Care Heroes Plaza, located at the corner of Oswald Court and One Healthy Way. Purchase an engraved brick or tree that thousands of patients, visitors, and employees will see every day as they enter and exit the hospital's front entrance.

For more information, visit [southnassau.org/buyabrick](https://southnassau.org/buyabrick).



# Mount Sinai South Nassau Opens Discharge Lounge

## Allows for Enhanced Flow Through the Hospital

In an effort to send patients home more quickly and free up bed space, Mount Sinai South Nassau recently opened the Discharge Lounge located near the main entrance adjacent to the Surgical Waiting Area on the first floor. While patients are waiting for their ride home, they can relax in a quiet, comfortable space and help themselves to amenities, such as reading material, water, warm beverages, and light snacks. A dedicated staff assists patients with any questions regarding their discharge instructions and paperwork.

The addition of the Discharge Lounge allows for the enhanced flow of patients through the hospital from admission to discharge.



**The Lounge** is open Monday to Friday, from 9 am to 7 pm. Closed on holidays.

**For more information**, call 516-632-4193 or 4840.

## › Digestive Disorders in Children

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fever, vomiting or cramping, and her appetite was normal.”

Breanna was seen by pediatric gastroenterologist Virginia Baez, MD, at Mount Sinai South Nassau. Dr. Baez ordered blood tests, performed a stool study, and prescribed another antibiotic.

But Breanna’s symptoms persisted for several more days. Concerned, Dr. Baez performed a colonoscopy, which provided live video images of the colon and rectum.

“I was able to examine the intestinal lining for inflammation and ulcers,” Dr. Baez said. “Breanna has ulcerative colitis, a chronic inflammatory bowel disease that causes inflammation in the digestive tract. In the United States, two to four of every 100,000 children, aged 10 to 19, will develop ulcerative colitis.”

Dr. Baez prescribed a short-term steroid and another medication to block inflammation in the colon as well as a low-residue diet that limits high-fiber foods, such as whole-grain breads and cereals, nuts, seeds, raw and dried fruits, and vegetables.

Soon after treatment was begun, Breanna’s condition improved and her diarrhea resolved, said Dr. Baez, who scheduled a

repeat colonoscopy in several months and another stool study.

“Although ulcerative colitis is a long-term illness that requires management throughout a person’s lifetime to prevent flare-ups, it is not a life-threatening condition, and life expectancy is typical for most.”

Ms. Collado is grateful to Dr. Baez for relieving her daughter’s symptoms and anxiety.

“God brought Dr. Baez for my little girl,” Ms. Collado said. “Breanna was very nervous about having the colonoscopy, and Dr. Baez gave her personal cell phone so she could play her music until she fell asleep. She treats her patients like her own kids and makes Breanna feel so comfortable.” ■

**TO SCHEDULE AN APPOINTMENT**, call 877-SOUTH-NASSAU (877-768-8462).

### About the Doctor



**Virginia Baez, MD**, is an Assistant Professor of Pediatrics in the Jack and Lucy Clark Department of Pediatrics, Division of Pediatric Gastroenterology, at the Icahn School of Medicine at Mount Sinai and Mount Sinai Kravis Children’s Hospital. She is board certified in pediatrics and pediatric gastroenterology.

Prior to her appointment at Mount Sinai South Nassau, Dr. Baez served as the Director of the Eosinophilic Esophagitis Clinic at University Hospitals Rainbow Babies & Children’s

Hospital in Cleveland.

She earned a medical degree from the University of Central Venezuela Luis Razetti School of Medicine and completed a residency at Einstein Medical Center in Philadelphia. She was fellowship trained in pediatric gastroenterology at University Hospitals Rainbow Babies & Children’s Hospital.

Dr. Baez specializes in treating a wide variety of digestive and nutritional disorders, including inflammatory bowel disease, celiac disease, abdominal pain, constipation, gastroesophageal reflux disease, and feeding problems.



Please reduce, reuse, and recycle

## Save the Dates

### Mount Sinai South Nassau's 40th Annual Golf Outing

**WHEN:** Monday, May 13, 2024

**WHERE: Three courses:**

The Seawane Club, Hewlett Harbor  
Rockaway Hunting Club, Lawrence  
Rockville Links Club, Rockville Centre  
(Barbeque dinner will be at  
The Seawane Club)



**To reserve a foursome or lock in a sponsorship,**  
call the Mount Sinai South Nassau Development Office  
at 516-377-5360.



### Soiree Under the Stars

**WHEN:** Saturday, November 9, 2024

**WHERE:** The Lannin, East Meadow

**For more information,** call the Development Office  
at 516-377-5360

#### Heart Healthy Recipe

### Orange Cranberry Overnight Oats

Looking for a power breakfast that will help reduce cholesterol levels, aid in weight loss, and keep you feeling full all morning? Then overnight oats is your go-to choice, says Mount Sinai South Nassau's Department of Nutrition. "It's an easy-to-prepare recipe that you will enjoy the next morning," said Lisa Fiore, Clinical Nutrition Manager.

#### Ingredients:

- 1 cup rolled oats
- ¾ cup milk of your choice
- ¼ cup fresh squeezed orange juice
- 1 teaspoon orange zest
- ¼ cup unsweetened dried cranberries
- 1 teaspoon honey
- 1 teaspoon vanilla extract
- 2 tablespoons chopped pecans (optional)
- 2 teaspoons chia seeds (optional)
- Cinnamon to taste



#### Preparation:

**Step 1:** Place all ingredients into a jar and mix well to combine.

**Step 2:** Place in refrigerator, covered, for at least three hours or overnight.

**Step 1:** Serve cold with sliced fresh fruit, if desired.

Servings: 1

**To find a doctor, visit [mountsinai.org/southnassau](https://mountsinai.org/southnassau).**

The information provided in this newsletter is for educational purposes only and should not be used as a substitute for professional medical advice, diagnosis, or treatment. Except where noted, models are used in photos and their appearance here is not reflective of a specific disease profile.

Read *Healthy Outlook* online at [mountsinai.org/southnassau](https://mountsinai.org/southnassau).

