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## Wegovy access in the UAE: the EDE named-patient pathway

How UAE patients access authentic Wegovy (semaglutide 2.4 mg) for chronic weight management and cardiovascular risk reduction via the Emirates Drug Establishment pathway, with DSCSA chain-of-custody from US authorised distributor to UAE dispensing pharmacy.

*Last reviewed 2026-05-12 by Reserve Meds clinical and regulatory team.*

### Quick orientation

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Wegovy is the Novo Nordisk brand name for semaglutide injection 2.4 mg, a once-weekly GLP-1 receptor agonist approved by the US FDA in June 2021 for chronic weight management in adults with obesity (BMI 30 or higher) or overweight (BMI 27 or higher) with at least one weight-related comorbidity. The FDA expanded the label in December 2022 to pediatric patients aged 12 years and older with BMI at or above the 95th percentile, and in March 2024 to cardiovascular risk reduction in adults with established cardiovascular disease and either obesity or overweight, which made Wegovy the first weight-management medicine ever granted a cardiovascular indication. In the United Arab Emirates Wegovy is not yet authorised for local sale by the Emirates Drug Establishment, which is precisely why the named-patient route through the EDE unregistered-medicine import permit is the legitimate, traceable pathway for UAE families seeking the authentic Novo Nordisk product.

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### Why patients in the UAE reach for Wegovy through NPP

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The UAE has a mature pharmaceutical regulatory environment, and the three structural access gaps the framework is built to bridge (registered but not stocked, registered for a different indication, or not registered at all) apply across the country's drug catalog. Wegovy sits squarely in the third category. As of the most recent public reporting, the Emirates Drug Establishment has not granted local marketing authorisation for Wegovy. UAE patients who require the authentic Novo Nordisk product currently source it through personal importation, by travel, or through unauthorised regional channels.

The third option is the one this page exists to displace. WHO and multiple national regulators have issued repeated warnings since 2023 about counterfeit semaglutide pens circulating in unauthorised channels in MENA, Latin America, and parts of Asia. Gray-market pens marketed as Wegovy or as compounded semaglutide have shown up in informal distribution networks across the Gulf. Counterfeit injectables are not a hypothetical risk in this corridor; they are an active enforcement concern. The Reserve Meds proposition for Wegovy in the UAE is authenticity: DSCSA chain-of-custody from a US authorised Novo Nordisk distributor (Cencora, McKesson, or Cardinal Health), through a validated cold-chain lane, into the UAE under a licensed importer's permit, with documentation that the dispensing pharmacy and the patient can both verify. The named-patient pathway is the legal route. The authenticity proposition is the value.

## The EDE named-patient pathway for Wegovy

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The federal pathway for a UAE-licensed physician to obtain a medicine that is not registered locally is the unregistered-medicine import permit, historically administered by MOHAP and, from 29 December 2025, administered through the EDE portal at [ede.gov.ae](http://ede.gov.ae) under Federal Decree-Law No. 38 of 2024. The framework allows hospitals and licensed pharmaceutical establishments to import a specific medicine for a specific patient when the medicine is approved by a recognised reference authority (the US FDA in Wegovy's case) and a clinically equivalent locally registered alternative is not suitable.

For Wegovy the clinical-justification angle is BMI-and-comorbidity specific. A complete application typically includes:

- A clinical justification letter from the treating physician (endocrinologist, obesity-medicine specialist, cardiologist for the CV-risk cohort, or primary-care physician with obesity-management credentials) documenting the on-label indication: adult obesity (BMI 30 or higher) or overweight (BMI 27 or higher) with at least one weight-related comorbidity (hypertension, type 2 diabetes, dyslipidemia), pediatric (age 12 and older) at or above the 95th percentile BMI, or established cardiovascular disease with obesity or overweight
- The patient's height, weight, calculated BMI, and the documented comorbid condition where applicable, with prior weight-management interventions tried
- The treating physician's UAE medical license (MOHAP, DHA, DOH, or Sharjah Health Authority)
- An anonymised patient identifier where the EDE submission allows
- Product details: Wegovy, semaglutide 2.4 mg, manufacturer Novo Nordisk, the specific pen presentations across the 16-week titration (0.25 mg, 0.5 mg, 1 mg, 1.7 mg, 2.4 mg), pack count, intended treatment duration
- The destination dispensing facility license number and pharmacy in charge
- A cold-chain plan with DSCSA-traceable chain-of-custody documentation from the US authorised distributor through to the dispensing pharmacy

Approval timelines for routine cases are typically 5 to 15 business days. Because Wegovy is not yet locally registered in the UAE, first-time imports through a smaller importer can fall on the longer side of that band or stretch slightly beyond. Established institutional importers with prior Wegovy file history typically clear within the routine window. Reserve Meds will only coordinate intake against the FDA-approved on-label indications. We do not coordinate cosmetic or off-label weight-loss inquiries.

## Where Wegovy gets dispensed in the UAE

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Wegovy is a refrigerated injectable that requires a 2 to 8 degrees Celsius cold chain end-to-end. The dispensing facility must hold a UAE pharmaceutical establishment license and on-site cold storage. The UAE institutions that handle named-patient cold-chain imports as established workflow include Cleveland Clinic Abu Dhabi (M42 group), Sheikh Khalifa Medical City in Abu Dhabi (SEHA), Tawam Hospital in Al Ain (SEHA), American Hospital Dubai (Mayo Clinic Care Network), King's College Hospital London Dubai, Mediclinic City Hospital in Dubai Healthcare City, and the larger NMC Healthcare sites. The endocrinology services at King's College Hospital London Dubai and American Hospital Dubai, the obesity-medicine programs at Cleveland Clinic

Abu Dhabi, and the cardiology services across the network are the natural homes for the Wegovy cohort.

Smaller clinics without import infrastructure route the case through a Dubai- or Abu Dhabi-based specialty importer who holds the establishment license, files the EDE permit, performs customs clearance under cold chain, and delivers the medicine to the prescribing physician's outpatient pharmacy with the DSCSA chain-of-custody packet attached. Northern Emirates families typically route to a Dubai or Abu Dhabi facility where their treating physician holds joint privileges.

## **Real cost picture for Wegovy in the UAE**

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US wholesale acquisition cost for Wegovy is publicly listed by Novo Nordisk at approximately USD 1,349 per 28-day supply, or roughly USD 16,000 to USD 17,600 per year at list. NovoCare Pharmacy in the United States offers a self-pay cash price of approximately USD 349 per month for eligible US patients (USD 4,188 per year), but that program is US-only and does not extend to international patients accessing Wegovy through a named-patient pathway. The UAE dirham is pegged to the US dollar at approximately 3.67 AED to 1 USD, so a 28-day supply at US WAC translates to roughly AED 4,950 today. The named-patient acquisition cost sits in a band finalised only at firm-quote issuance after document review.

International cold-chain logistics typically runs USD 500 to USD 1,200 per shipment (approximately AED 1,800 to AED 4,400), with validated 2 to 8 degrees Celsius packaging, temperature data loggers, and customs clearance under permit. UAE customs and EDE permit fees are nominal relative to the drug cost. Reserve Meds' coordination fee is itemised separately. On insurance: Daman, Thiqa, GIG Gulf, Sukoon, ADNIC, and Orient each assess named-patient cases case by case, and Wegovy's obesity indication has historically been a lower-coverage line in most regional plans than oncology or rare disease. We supply the documentation; the claim is yours or your hospital's to file.

## **Typical timeline for Wegovy in the UAE**

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For an established weight-management patient with a clean BMI-and-comorbidity letter and prior treatment documentation, the typical end-to-end cycle is 3 to 6 weeks. The EDE permit step generally runs 5 to 15 business days; for an importer that has not previously filed Wegovy, the front-end can extend to 3 to 4 weeks. US-side sourcing through authorised distributors adds 3 to 7 days. International cold-chain transit and UAE customs clearance under the import permit are typically 3 to 7 days, well inside the unopened-pen stability envelope (the 28-day room-temperature stability window provides usable slack after the cold-chain segment ends but is consumed by any port delay). Cold-chain biologic shipments add 2 to 3 days versus an ambient-controlled product. Maintenance fills follow a quarterly cadence; the first three to four titration pens carry the front-end load.

## **What your physician needs to provide**

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The clinical justification letter is the centre of the EDE package. For Wegovy the letter typically includes:

- The patient's height, weight, calculated BMI, and the on-label indication: adult obesity (BMI 30 or higher), adult overweight (BMI 27 or higher) with at least one weight-related comorbidity (hypertension, type 2 diabetes, dyslipidemia), pediatric (age 12 and older) at or

above the 95th percentile BMI, or established cardiovascular disease with obesity or overweight

- Prior weight-management history (lifestyle interventions, prior pharmacotherapy, any prior GLP-1 RA exposure)
- The dosing plan and 16-week titration schedule (0.25 mg weeks 1 to 4, 0.5 mg weeks 5 to 8, 1 mg weeks 9 to 12, 1.7 mg weeks 13 to 16, 2.4 mg maintenance from week 17), with the slow titration designed to limit gastrointestinal adverse effects that drive early discontinuation
- The monitoring plan: thyroid C-cell tumor symptoms (neck mass, dysphagia, dyspnea, persistent hoarseness), acute pancreatitis (persistent severe abdominal pain), gallbladder disease and cholelithiasis, acute kidney injury related to dehydration from GI losses, increased resting heart rate, hypersensitivity reactions, suicidal behavior and ideation as a class-labeled concern, and diabetic retinopathy worsening in patients with type 2 diabetes
- Screening confirmation that the patient does not have a personal or family history of medullary thyroid carcinoma or Multiple Endocrine Neoplasia syndrome type 2 (these are contraindications per the boxed warning)

The treating physician's UAE license must match the emirate of the dispensing facility (DHA for Dubai, DOH for Abu Dhabi, MOHAP for the Northern Emirates, Sharjah Health Authority for Sharjah).

## Common questions about Wegovy in the UAE

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**Wegovy is not registered with the EDE. Is the named-patient route legal?** Yes. The EDE unregistered-medicine import permit exists precisely for this case: a medicine approved by the US FDA but not yet authorised for local sale in the UAE. The permit, the importer's establishment license, and the dispensing facility's pharmacy license together form the legal framework. Sourcing the same product through informal regional channels, by contrast, exposes the patient to counterfeit risk and falls outside the legal pathway.

**How do I know the product is authentic?** The Reserve Meds chain-of-custody packet includes the DSCSA Transaction Information, Transaction History, and Transaction Statement (the DSCSA T3 documents) from the US authorised Novo Nordisk distributor, the validated cold-chain temperature log for the shipment, the customs documentation under the EDE import permit, and the dispensing pharmacy's receipt. The patient and the dispensing pharmacy can both verify the product's serial number against Novo Nordisk's records.

**Will Daman, Thiqa, GIG Gulf, Sukoon, ADNIC, or Orient cover Wegovy?** Each insurer assesses case by case, and obesity-management coverage has historically been narrower than oncology or rare-disease coverage. Cardiovascular risk reduction in adults with established CVD and obesity or overweight is a relatively newer indication and some insurers are still updating their formularies. We supply the documentation; we do not promise coverage.

**What is the safety profile?** The most common adverse events are gastrointestinal: nausea, diarrhea, vomiting, constipation, abdominal pain, generally dose-related and improving over time. Serious adverse events listed in the prescribing information include acute pancreatitis, gallbladder disease, acute kidney injury related to dehydration, hypoglycemia when used with insulin or sulfonylureas, diabetic retinopathy complications in patients with type 2 diabetes, increased resting heart rate, hypersensitivity reactions, and suicidal behavior and ideation as a

class concern. Wegovy carries a boxed warning for thyroid C-cell tumors based on rodent studies and is contraindicated in patients with a personal or family history of medullary thyroid carcinoma or Multiple Endocrine Neoplasia syndrome type 2.

**Why Wegovy versus Zepbound?** Zepbound (tirzepatide, Eli Lilly) is the closest direct competitor, FDA-approved for chronic weight management in November 2023 and for moderate-to-severe obstructive sleep apnea in adults with obesity in 2024. SURMOUNT-5 head-to-head data suggests tirzepatide produces greater mean weight loss than semaglutide at maximum doses. As of 2026, only Wegovy carries an FDA-approved indication for cardiovascular risk reduction. Choice between the two is a clinician-driven decision based on patient preference, comorbidity profile, and the cardiovascular indication.

**Is Wegovy a chronic therapy?** Yes. Discontinuation typically results in weight regain over 6 to 12 months in published follow-up cohorts, which is part of the conversation the prescriber should have with the patient before initiation.

## Where Reserve Meds fits in Wegovy cases

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Reserve Meds is a US-based concierge coordinator. We do not replace your physician, do not replace the EDE, and do not replace the dispensing pharmacy. For Wegovy in the UAE, the value proposition centres on authenticity. We orchestrate US-side sourcing through authorised Novo Nordisk distributors (Cencora, McKesson, Cardinal Health), the regulatory documentation kit your physician needs (BMI-and-comorbidity template, 16-week titration reference, monitoring plan summary including the thyroid C-cell warning), validated 2 to 8 degrees Celsius cold-chain logistics, the DSCSA T3 chain-of-custody packet, and a single named coordinator through the case. We will not coordinate intake against off-label or cosmetic weight-loss requests. We exist specifically to displace the gray-market alternative for families who care about authenticity.

## Next step

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If your physician has decided Wegovy is the right next step and authenticity matters, the EDE named-patient pathway is the legal route and the chain-of-custody packet is the verification. Join the waitlist below and we will confirm eligibility within 24 to 48 hours and route the documentation kit to your physician.

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**Review & oversight.** Content on this page is reviewed by Reserve Meds's clinical and regulatory team. A US-licensed pharmacist reviews every prescription before dispensing. Regulatory posture is informational, not legal advice; case-specific questions route to retained outside counsel. Review methodology >

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