

# Weight loss drug gets US nod to treat sleep apnea; India launch likely next year

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New Delhi: In good news for those suffering from obstructive sleep apnea (OSA), a condition characterised by disordered breathing during sleep, the US FDA has, for the first

time, approved an anti-diabetic drug also used for weight loss, sold under the brand name Zepbound (Tirzepatide), to manage the condition in adults with obesity.

Treatments currently for moderate to severe OSA involve using assistive breathing devices such as CPAP and Bi-Pap.

Zepbound makers Eli Lilly said they would launch the injectable drug under the brand name Mounjaro in India by 2025 after obtaining all approvals. Pricing is yet to be finalised. "Our pricing strategy in India will reflect the medicine's efficacy and the significant value it brings in reducing the overall health and economic burden of type 2 diabetes and obesity," Eli Lilly said. Approximately, 104 million Indians have OSA, and 47 million have moderate or severe OSA, according to a study published in Sleep Medicine Reviews.

"One of the treatments for OSA is weight reduction. This drug helps in reducing weight and, therefore, helps improve breathing during sleep. So, it can certainly prove to be a game-changer. But we need to wait for long-term results, potential side-effects and its applicability in a range for OSA patients," said a senior doctor. OSA occurs when a person's upper airway becomes blocked, causing pauses in breathing during sleep. Zepbound's approval for moderate to severe OSA in obese adults was based on two randomised, double-blind, placebo-controlled studies of 469 adults without type 2 diabetes.

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