

PENNY SAVER NEWS

FAX: 932-5261

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BY: Mary A. Keith, Ph.D., L.D.
Food, Nutrition and Health Agent**HILLSBOROUGH COUNTY**

5339 S. County Road 579

Seffner, FL 33584-3334

PH:(813)744-5519 x 136, FAX:744-5776
e-mail:mkeith@ufl.edu**Weight Loss Pills in the News**

After years of waiting, impatiently by some people, the FDA has finally approved 2 different medications for helping with weight loss. You've probably heard the first announcements at least, and we will all probably be drowning in ads and offers before too long. But before you take the leap, read the fine print carefully. One, or both, or neither, may be the best for your situation. Here's a summary of Belviq® and Qsymia®.

First, some things are the same for both of them. Both are prescribed for adults over 18 only, no children. You have to have a BMI (body mass index) of 30 or more, or have a BMI of at least 27 and be suffering from at least 1 medical condition that is caused by or made worse by your being obese before the doctor can prescribe them. And neither one is intended to be used by itself. They both will work best in combination with a low calorie diet and lot of exercise. Finally, neither one should be used by women who are pregnant. They could cause serious damage to the baby.

So, what's different about them? They are completely different medications and they work in very different ways in our bodies. Belviq® acts in our brain. It's not completely clear how it works. But doctors think it 'tricks' our brains into thinking that we are feeling more full than we really are. It has to be taken twice a day, along with less food and more exercise. And you can NOT take St. John's Wort or tryptophan with it.

In the tests that have been done, less than half people without diabetes who took it for a year lost about 5% of their weight. Even fewer people with diabetes lost that much. Once you start taking it, your doctor should be checking with you every couple of

months to see how you're doing. If you haven't lost 5% of your weight by 3 months, then it probably isn't going to work for you. Your doctor will take you off the medication.

There is also a list of known, possible side effects. Some people might find that they're too bad to keep taking Belviq®. The uncomfortable side effects start with headaches, nausea, constipation and tiredness. Some people had memory or attention problems. And at high doses it can cause heart damage, so don't think that more will work better!

The other medication is Qsymia® (that's pronounced cue-simia). This is a combination of two medications, in an extended release formula. Again, they're not sure exactly how, but these seem to act more like hormones. That's the guess because Qsymia® cannot be used by people who've had or have glaucoma or hyperthyroidism. And women will often be given birth control pills while they're using Qsymia® to prevent them from getting pregnant. It can be toxic to the baby. It will only be available in certain pharmacies to help control it.

Some of the side effects that have been reported so far include tingling in the hands or feet, insomnia, dry mouth and changes in taste. Heart rates often go up, and so do suicidal thoughts and behaviors. There are other changes in body chemistry too.

The manufacturers of both of these medications are being required to keep on doing research on them. One area of special concern seems to be heart health or risk. The FDA has special websites set up where people can report any side effects they think are being caused by either of them. That information will be included in the packages, for anyone who starts to use them.

Here's a make-ahead salad to help keep you on your lower-calorie diet, before

you need the risks of these medications. Go easy on the salt and pepper since the soy sauce is all ready salty. And if your family can't handle peanuts, this would be great made with almond butter. It's bright and colorful, and tastes great too!

Broccoli Salad with Peanut Dressing

1 bag (about 4 cups) broccoli florets	1 medium sweet red pepper
1/3 cup sliced red onion	3 Tbsp smooth peanut butter
2 tsp roasted (dark) sesame oil	2 Tbsp vinegar (rice is better)
2 Tbsp lime juice	1 Tbsp low-sodium soy sauce
Salt, pepper and red pepper flakes to taste	2 tsp honey or syrup

Steam broccoli according to package directions just until tender-crisp (probably just 3 minutes). Rinse briefly with cold water to chill. Put in large bowl. Slice pepper into thin strips. Add pepper and onion to broccoli. In small bowl combine peanut butter and sesame oil and stir to combine. Add vinegar, lime juice, soy sauce and honey and stir until smooth. Add salt and pepper if desired. Pour over vegetables and toss gently until vegetables are coated. Add red pepper flakes if desired. Cover and refrigerate at least 1 hour, up to 24 hours, before serving. Serves 4.