



Peptides: A Patient Information Guide

Education • Performance • Recovery • Wellness

*Prepared by Dr. Sara Whatley, DO
Thrive Integrative Wellness*

What Are Peptides?

Peptides are **short chains of amino acids**, which are the building blocks of proteins. They act as **messengers in the body**, signaling cells to perform specific functions such as healing, hormone regulation, metabolism, immune response, and tissue repair.

Your body naturally produces peptides every day. Therapeutic peptides are designed to **support or enhance these natural signaling pathways** when the body is under stress, aging, injured, or metabolically dysregulated.

How Do Peptides Work?

Peptides work by:

- Binding to specific receptors on cells
- Sending targeted signals (e.g., repair tissue, release hormones, regulate appetite)
- Supporting communication between systems (brain, gut, muscles, immune system)

Unlike medications that often block pathways, peptides generally **support or optimize existing biological processes**.

Why Are Peptides Used in Integrative Medicine?

Peptides are commonly used to support:

- **Healing & recovery**
- **Metabolic health & weight management**
- **Cognitive function**
- **Hormone balance**
- **Immune resilience**
- **Longevity & healthy aging**
- **Athletic performance & injury recovery**

They are most effective when combined with **nutrition, movement, sleep, and lifestyle optimization**.

Common Categories of Peptides

1. Metabolic & Weight Management Peptides

Support appetite regulation, insulin sensitivity, and metabolic health.

- Examples: GLP-1–based peptides, dual or triple incretins
- Often used for weight loss, insulin resistance, and metabolic optimization

2. Healing & Tissue Repair Peptides

Support cellular repair, injury recovery, and inflammation control.

- Common uses: joint pain, tendon/ligament injuries, post-workout recovery

3. Muscle, Strength & Performance Peptides

Support muscle preservation, recovery, and physical performance.

- Often paired with resistance training and adequate protein intake

4. Cognitive & Neurological Peptides

Support brain health, focus, memory, and stress resilience.

- May support mood, sleep, and nervous system regulation

5. Immune & Anti-Inflammatory Peptides

Support immune balance and inflammatory regulation.

- Used in chronic inflammation, auto-immune support, or post-illness recovery

6. Longevity & Cellular Health Peptides

Target mitochondrial function, cellular signaling, and healthy aging pathways.

- Often used in preventive or optimization-focused care

7. Skin, Hair & Tissue Quality Peptides

Support collagen production, skin elasticity, hair health, and wound healing.

Potential Benefits of Peptide Therapy

Patients may experience:

- Improved recovery and healing
- Better energy and metabolic flexibility
- Reduced inflammation
- Improved body composition
- Enhanced mental clarity or focus
- Support for healthy aging

Benefits vary by individual and depend on proper selection, dosing, and lifestyle factors.

How Are Peptides Taken?

Depending on the peptide and clinical use, administration may include:

- Subcutaneous injection
- Oral or sublingual formulations
- Topical formulations (for skin/hair peptides)

Your provider will determine the safest and most effective method.

Are Peptides Safe?

When prescribed appropriately and medically supervised, peptides are generally well tolerated. However, **they are not appropriate for everyone.**

Contraindications & Who Should Use Caution

Peptide therapy may not be recommended for individuals who:

- Are pregnant or breastfeeding
- Have active cancer or certain hormone-sensitive cancers
- Have uncontrolled medical conditions
- Are taking medications that may interact with specific peptides
- Have a history of certain endocrine or metabolic disorders

A full medical evaluation is required before starting therapy.

Possible Side Effects

Side effects depend on the peptide and dose, but may include:

- Injection site irritation
- Temporary fatigue
- Mild GI symptoms
- Headache
- Changes in appetite

Most side effects are **dose-related and reversible**.

What Peptides Are NOT

- Not a replacement for healthy nutrition or exercise
- Not a quick fix or shortcut
- Not appropriate for casual or unsupervised use
- Not one-size-fits-all

Peptides work best as **part of a comprehensive, personalized plan**.

The Integrative Approach

In an integrative medical model, peptides are combined with:

- Personalized nutrition (especially adequate protein & fiber)
- Strength and movement plans
- Sleep and stress optimization
- Gut and hormone support
- Long-term health strategy planning

The goal is **sustainable health and function**, not temporary results.

Final Thoughts

Peptides represent an exciting area of modern medicine that bridges **science, recovery, and wellness**. When used thoughtfully and under medical supervision, they can support the body's natural ability to heal, adapt, and thrive.

If you're interested in learning whether peptide therapy is right for you, speak with your provider for a personalized evaluation.