



Cad é an Scéal?

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agus cultúir as
Gaeilge

Istigh

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WHO urges weight loss jab access

Niamh Griffin
Health Correspondent

Weight loss drugs such as Ozempic and Mounjaro offer hope to millions as obesity becomes one of the most serious global public health challenges, affecting up to 2bn people by 2030, the World Health Organization (WHO) has said.

The WHO, which has launched its first guidelines for use of skinny jabs, warned that medicines alone will not solve the challenge as it called on governments to create healthier societies.

Some 56% of people in Ireland are living with obesity or are overweight, according to the latest Department of Health figures.

WHO director general Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus said: "Obesity is one of the most serious public health challenges of our time.

"Globally, more than 1bn people are living with obesity, and that number is expected to double by 2030."

In recent years, it has been discovered GLP-1 therapies, developed to treat diabetes, can also impact obesity.

Yesterday, the WHO published its first guidelines with some conditions.

"These new medicines are a powerful clinical tool offering hope to millions," the director general said. "But let me be clear, medication alone will not solve the obesity crisis. Obesity is a complex disease which requires comprehensive lifelong care."

He also called for healthier environments to promote health and prevent obesity. Anyone at high risk for becoming obese needs early access to treatment, and there should be lifelong care.

"Crucially, the use of GLP-1s does not replace the need for healthy diet and physical activity. Our recommendation is conditional, and we acknowledge the challenges," said Mr Ghebreyesus.

More data is needed on the safety and effectiveness of long-term use, he said, as well as what happens when patients stop using the jabs.

The WHO also noted that common advice is to use these therapies in parallel with more exercise and a healthier diet. It said its reservations are "based on low-certainty evidence suggesting it may enhance treatment outcomes".

Mr Ghebreyesus also raised concern about costs, saying: "These medicines could widen the gap between the rich and poor."

In Ireland, Saxenda is funded for weight loss, but so far Ozempic is only funded for diabetes care. It can cost around €150 monthly for weight loss. There are also fears of shortages impacting diabetes patients. Mounjaro is under funding consideration for diabetes and weight loss. It costs around €275 a month privately.

The WHO also cautioned: "GLP-1 therapies are projected to reach fewer than 10% of those who could benefit by 2030". It called for pooled procurement, tiered pricing, and voluntary licensing to be considered.

Pile on



The panel from Limerick's Árdcoil Ris celebrate winning the Dean Ryan Cup final in Kilmallock yesterday after beating Cork's Christians Brothers College. SEE: Sport, Page 21

Picture: Dan Linehan

Zelenskyy visit vital for 'solidarity'

Paul Hosford

■ Ukraine president to address Oireachtas as leaders show support

European leaders have rallied to show support for Volodymyr Zelenskyy after US-Ukrainian talks to revise a peace proposal that initially favoured Russia.

This comes ahead of the Ukrainian president's historic first visit to Ireland.

As the US envoy headed to Moscow to brief the Kremlin, Mr Zelenskyy was warmly received by French president Emmanuel Macron in Paris yesterday. The two joined a call with about a dozen other European leaders.

Mr Zelenskyy visits Ireland today, addressing a sitting of the Oireachtas.

He will meet with Taoiseach Micheál Martin and President Catherine Connolly before addressing the Oireachtas.

Sources expect his speech

to focus on the need for Europe to support Ukrainian sovereignty, and that Russia is made to pay for the rebuilding of Ukraine if and when a peace deal is agreed.

Mr Zelenskyy told a joint press conference with Mr Macron that Kyiv's priorities in peace talks were to maintain sovereignty, to ensure strong security guarantees, and that territorial disputes remained the most complicated.

He called on Ukraine's Western allies to ensure Russia was not rewarded for the war it started. He said he hoped to hold talks with US president Donald Trump after Mr Trump's special envoy, Steve Witkoff, had

visited Russia this week.

Mr Macron said only Ukraine could decide on its territories in peace negotiations with Russia.

Earlier, Mr Zelenskyy made clear that Ukrainian and US negotiators had not yet fully hammered out revisions to the proposed US plan — despite two rounds of talks to adjust terms that initially endorsed Russia's main wartime demands.

There were "some tough issues that still have to be worked through", Mr Zelenskyy posted following Sunday's US-Ukrainian talks at a Florida luxury golf resort built by Mr Trump's fellow real estate magnate Mr Witkoff.

The Irish visit will come amid tight security, with checks of Leinster House, Government Buildings, and the surrounding areas being carried out throughout Monday and a no-fly zone for drones implemented around Dublin.

Tánaiste Simon Harris said he was "really pleased" Mr Zelenskyy was coming to Ireland.

"This is an important visit," he said. "It's an important visit for the people of Ireland to show solidarity with Ukraine, solidarity that we've shown really since the beginning."

"A solidarity the towns and villages right across our country have shown in welcoming so many people from Ukraine into their schools, into their homes. In many cases, people from Ukraine who are making a really ex-

cellent contribution to our own economy here.

"But it's also a chance, as we prepare to take up the presidency of the Council of the EU next year, to get the latest from president Zelenskyy in terms of how he sees things progressing. We need to see peace. We all want to see an end to war. But how peace comes about matters.

"It has to be a just peace. It has to be a lasting peace, an enduring peace, and it has to be a peace that doesn't reward aggression."

Foreign affairs minister Helen McEntee will bring two proposals to the Government, first asking for appro-

val in an International Claims Commission for Ukraine. The commission will be responsible for determining claims for damage, loss, or injury caused by internationally wrongful acts committed by Russia against Ukraine.

The minister will also bring a 2030 Ireland-Ukraine roadmap, which includes the approval of an additional €100m for the provision of non-lethal military support for Ukraine and a contribution of €25m for Ukraine's urgent energy needs.

■ Reuters and Irish Examiner
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Public urged to get flu vaccination as hospitalisations double in one week

Niamh Griffin

Doctors are urging the public to get vaccinated now so the flu does not ruin Christmas, as hospitalisations have doubled in a week.

As concern grows at the prospect of a very difficult winter ahead, the HSE and GPs have now called on the public to consider vaccination against the flu.

HSE chief clinical officer Colm Henry said: "We are seeing a rapid increase of cases of patients with influenza, including those needing hospitalisation.

"There has been an earlier start to the influenza season and we are concerned at the risk this presents to those susceptible to more severe disease."

The numbers indicate health services will face significant pressures this

winter, he added.

Dr Henry said: "418 cases were reported in hospitals the week ending November 29, compared to just 213 the week before."

He called on healthcare workers and people in at-risk groups to get vaccinated as soon as possible.

"The flu vaccine takes two weeks to become fully effective," Dr Henry said.

"Therefore the best time to get vaccinated is now, before rates of infection peak over the busy holiday period."

The Irish College of GPs also warned very young babies and older people with weak immune systems are most at risk.

"We are seeing the winter flu outbreak several weeks earlier this year, which means that the peak will coincide with the Christmas

and New Year holidays," said Scott Walkin, the college's antimicrobial resistance and infection control clinical lead.

A new strain of flu, H3N2 subclade K, being seen now in Ireland is "highly viru-



Colm Henry said flu season has started earlier this year.

lent", said Dr Walkin.

"H3 flu tends to be more severe than other types.

"Already even though the season is just starting, seven people have died, and admissions to hospitals have increased by 50% between week 46 and week 47."

He echoed the call to get vaccinated, saying it provides good protection against getting severely ill.

"The vaccine is effective within two weeks of getting it, so it's really important to get the vaccine now to ensure it doesn't ruin your Christmas or someone else's," he said.

The flu vaccine is available from both GPs and pharmacies.

It is free for older people, children over two, healthcare workers, pregnant women, and other vulnerable groups.

Man who set fire to house slashed owner with knife

Liam Heylin

A man who set fire to a four-storey Georgian house in Cork City, where four people were celebrating Christmas Day, slashed the owner with

a knife as he tried to leave, it emerged at his sentencing hearing.

The hearing also heard he was on High Court bail at the time on a separate case involving aggravated burglary.

Shane Casey, aged 33, was admitted to a psychiatric hospital unit while on bail and was discharged 15 days before he carried out this arson in Cork City.

Mr Casey started the fire with an accelerant, and as smoke and flames spread through the building, he held a knife at the front door and forced it closed from the outside.

Defence senior counsel

Ray Boland said Mr Casey was diagnosed with paranoid schizophrenia.

"He suffers from distorted and paranoid thinking," Mr Boland told the court.

Ms Justice Siobhán Lankford said that she would consider the evidence given at the sentencing hearing and give judgment on Friday, December 5.

News: 5

800 missing after floods

More than 800 people are missing after floods killed 1,100 people last week in Indonesia, Sri Lanka, and Thailand, with Indonesia urging more action to confront the changing climate.

The flooding and landslides killed at least 604 people in Indonesia, 366 in Sri Lanka, and 176 in Thailand, authorities said.

World: 18

Gardaí commence pilot use of Tasers

Paul Hosford
Acting Political Editor

A pilot programme for equipping frontline gardaí with Tasers will begin this week.

Justice minister Jim O'Callaghan will bring a memo to Cabinet noting the beginning of the project that allows around 120 specially trained frontline gardaí in Dublin central, Waterford, and Kilkenny to carry conducted energy devices, commonly known as Tasers.

Specially trained frontline gardaí will be given the devices as part of an evaluation for their use as an additional tactical option in overall "graduated policing response".

Sources said the trial will be similar to that of body-worn cameras, which have been credited recently with "de-escalating situations and being very useful".

Currently, just a small number of gardaí in the Armed Response Unit and Emergency Response Units have access to Tasers, but Garda Commissioner Justin Kelly said in his first days in the job that gardaí should have everything they need to undertake their duties and enforce the law.

He said this will include the "full rollout" of body-worn cameras, adding that An Garda Síochána was moving towards a further procurement process.

"We've seen some of the recent incidents where frontline members have been under significant pressure and, on a weekly basis, I see the reports of members of gardaí who were injured — so it's really important that they have everything they need to protect themselves."

Also at Cabinet, Mr O'Callaghan will present his National Development Plan of up to €2.18bn.

It is believed key priorities include expanding prison capacity, the national rollout of body-worn cameras, and State-owned accommodation for asylum seekers.

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