



IRELAND TO GET PILL THAT FIGHTS OBESITY

■ By **DARRAGH MURPHY**

A NEW scientifically proven drug that fights obesity is set to go on sale in Ireland within months for less than €2.

Obesity pill Orlistat — approved by the EU's medicines watchdog — will be the first medication of its kind to go on sale over the counter when it hits the shelves here, probably this summer.

The pill, which works by blocking the absorption of fat in the body, is to be sold to people with a body mass index (BMI) of 28 and above — and drug firms expect to sell it for as little as €1.59.

GlaxoSmithKline, which hopes to sell the pill commercially within months, says its clinical trials show that adding Orlistat to a reduced-calorie, lower-fat

diet, can help people lose 50 per cent more weight than dieting alone.

The drug, called a "significant milestone" by Glaxo, helped slimmers lose an average of 10lb over six months in trials.

Slimmers who took a tablet with every meal typically lost 50 per cent more weight than those who relied on willpower.

Wind

There are some side effects, however, including increased wind and diarrhoea.

Because the drug can also interfere with absorbing some vitamins, slimmers using the drug are advised to supplement their diet with a multi-vitamin pill.