



DIET GUIDELINES AFTER BARIATRIC SURGERY

The purpose of your surgery is to **reduce the amount of food you can eat**. After surgery, your diet will consist of **small, high-protein meals**. It is important for you to eat slowly and chew well.

You will be eating less food and fewer calories. For this reason, you will need to take **vitamin and mineral supplements daily**.



Guidelines for Eating

- **Eat three meals per day.** Avoid snacking. Snacking or eating throughout the day may keep you from losing weight. It may even cause weight gain because you are eating too many calories.
- **Eat small amounts.** At first, your stomach can hold only up to 1/2 cup of food. If you try to eat more than this, you may get sick. Your stomach will slowly stretch over time. After about four weeks, you may eat between 1/2 and 3/4 cup of food per meal. To keep the weight off, you will need to eat small amounts of food for the rest of your life. The long-term goal is a portion of 1 cup of food at meals.
- **Stop eating as soon as you feel satisfied.**
- **Chew all foods into a paste, the thickness of applesauce.** The opening that leads from your stomach to your bowel (intestine) is very small. Foods that are not chewed well may block this opening. This can cause discomfort. You may feel sick to your stomach vomit. To prevent this, cut your food into small pieces. Then, chew your food well. It may take more time to chew beef, raw fruits, and raw vegetables.
- **Eat slowly.** Each meal should last 20 to 30 minutes. Eating too fast can cause you to eat too much before you feel full. It can also cause nausea, vomiting (throwing up), pain, or pressure in the shoulder or upper chest. So, sit down to eat your meals. Try setting your spoon or fork down between each bite, then wait at least one minute before taking the next bite.
- **Eat at least 60 grams of protein per day.** Since you are eating less food, you will need to work harder to get enough protein. Try to include a good source of protein with each meal (such as eggs, lean meats, poultry, fish, beans, and low-fat or fat-free dairy products). Protein is important to help you maintain muscle while you quickly lose weight.
- **Avoid sugar and fat.** Eat a well-balanced diet. Do not fill your small stomach with junk foods that lack vitamins and other important nutrients. You should eat lean proteins, low-fat milk products, fruits, vegetables, and whole grains.
- **Do not chew gum.** Gum chewing may cause gas. If you swallow the gum, it may cause a blockage.



Guidelines for Liquids

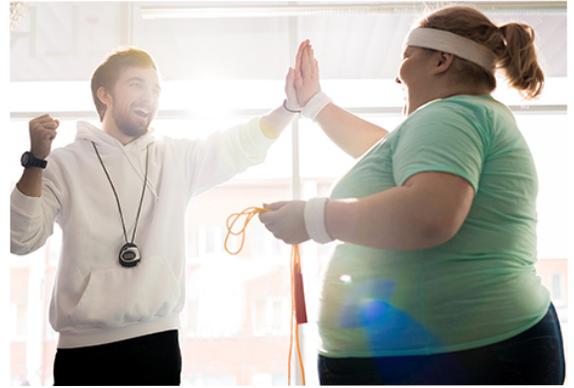
- **Do not drink liquids with meals.** Stop drinking 30 minutes before your meals. Then wait 30 minutes after eating to drink liquids again. This will:
 - Prevent the stomach from over-filling.
 - Keep food from flushing out too quickly.
 - Keep you feeling full longer.
- **Sip all liquids slowly.** Drinking too quickly may cause nausea or vomiting.
- **Drink plenty of calorie-free liquids between meals.** Plain water is best. Drink at least 6 to 8 cups (48 to 64 ounces) of fluid per day.
- **Avoid carbonated (fizzy) drinks.** These can cause gas and bloating. They may also stretch your stomach.
- **Avoid alcohol** for the first year after surgery.
- **Avoid high-calorie liquids.** These add extra calories without making you feel full. For example, do not drink:
 - Regular soda pop
 - Coffee drinks (mocha, latte, cappuccino or other specialty drinks)
 - Kool-Aid
 - Smoothies
 - Alcohol
 - Sugar-sweetened drinks
 - More than 1/2 cup (4 ounces) diluted fruit juice per day.
- **Avoid caffeine.** Caffeine may irritate your stomach and prevent your body from absorbing iron.





Other Important Guidelines

- **Get regular exercise.** Since exercise uses energy and burn calories, it is very important for weight loss. If exercise is not in your current routine, begin slowly. As you lose weight, movement will get easier. Exercise is an important part of your weight loss journey.



Hidden Sugars That May Cause Dumping Syndrome

There are many names for sugar. Be sure to read food labels and check the list of ingredients. Hidden sources of sugar include **sucrose, dextrose, turbinado sugar, brown sugar, high fructose corn syrup, corn syrup solids, honey, maple syrup, molasses, and agave.**

Fructose, a natural fruit sugar, may be used in cooking, but only in small amounts. You may use sugar alternatives like **NutraSweet** (aspartame), **Sweet 'N' Low** (saccharin), **Splenda**, and **Stevia**. These should not cause dumping syndrome.

For more information about **Dumping Syndrome**, please see page 13 under “How to treat or prevent problems.”



Your Diet

There are **five stages** to your diet plan. You will start with stage 1 and progress to stage 5. If you have problems—like throwing up or feeling sick to your stomach—you may need to go back to an earlier stage. For example, if you are having problems with solid foods, step back to a pureed diet. If you are having problems with the pureed diet, go back to liquids. Then, slowly move to the next stage in your diet.

First day after surgery – Clear liquids

Day 2 to day 13 – Low-fat full liquids

Day 14 to 27 – Pureed foods

Day 28 – Soft foods

8 to 12 weeks after surgery – Regular foods

Stage 1 - Clear Liquids (day after surgery)

Drink only clear liquids for the first 1 to 2 days after surgery (while you are in the hospital).

Goal:

Slowly sip 6 to 8 cups (48 to 64 ounces) of liquid during the day. Drinking too fast can cause nausea, vomiting, pain, or pressure.

Tips:

- **Drink 2 ounces of liquid every 30 minutes.** Try to increase this over the next 48 hours until you reach 6 to 8 cups (48 to 64 ounces) of liquid per day.
- **Avoid straws.** Straws bring air into the stomach, causing gas, bloating, pain, or pressure in the shoulder or upper chest.

Suggested Liquids:

- Water
- Decaf, sugar-free iced tea
- Sugar-free popsicles
- Clear broth
- Cranberry juice or 100% apple or grape juice (add extra water to dilute it; limit yourself to 1/2 cup, or 4 ounces, per day)
- Decaf coffee or tea with no sugar or honey (artificial sweeteners are okay)
- Sugar-free enhanced or infused water
- Herbal tea
- Low-calorie sports drink (less than 20 calories per 8 ounces)
- Sugar-free gelatin



Stage 2 - Low-fat Full Liquids (day 2 to day 13)

Full liquids are a little thicker than clear liquids. You will be drinking low-fat full liquids when you leave the hospital. Stay on this diet until two weeks (13 days) after surgery.

Goals:

- Have no more than 1/2 cup of food per meal.
- Add more liquid choices.
- Keep drinking 6 to 8 cups (48 to 64 ounces) of fluid each day.
- We suggest using a protein drink that meets the following nutrition guidelines (per 8 ounce serving):
 - No more than 200 calories
 - 15 to 30 grams of protein
 - Less than 20 grams of carbohydrate
 - Less than 5 grams of fat
 - Less than 10 grams of sugar
- Start taking vitamin and mineral supplements.

Sample Menu for a Low-fat Full Liquid Diet

Breakfast

¼ cup Cream of Wheat

¼ cup low-calorie yogurt (no chunks of fruit)

Lunch

¼ cup low-calorie smooth yogurt

¼ cup sugar-free pudding

Dinner

¼ cup low-fat strained cream soup

¼ cup low-calorie smooth yogurt

Liquids Between Meals (throughout the day)

Total of 6 to 8 cups (48 to 64 ounces) of fluids per day. Choose water or sugar-free drinks.

Tips:

- To make sure you drink enough fluids, you may want to space them throughout the day. Try drinking about:
 - 20 ounces before lunch
 - 20 ounces before dinner
 - 20 ounces before bed
- Eat three meals daily at about the same time each day. Do not skip meals.
- Your body may find it easier to handle liquids at room temperature than ice-cold liquids.
- Freeze liquids in plastic bottles to carry with you.

Foods Allowed:

- Skim milk, 1% milk, plain soymilk or Lactaid milk
- Approved protein drink
- Low-calorie or “light” smooth yogurt (no chunks of fruit)
- Fat-free plain yogurt
- Fat-free Greek yogurt
- Sugar-free pudding
- Low-fat cream soup, strained
- Cream of Wheat, Cream of Rice and Malt-O-Meal
- Any clear liquids allowed in your stage 1 diet. If you drink juice, have no more than 4 ounces per day (diluted, pulp-free, not sweetened).

Grocery List for Low-fat, Full Liquid Diet

- Skim or 1% milk
- Plain soymilk
- Low-calorie smooth yogurt
- Plain yogurt
- Fat-free Greek yogurt
- Sugar-free pudding
- Approved protein drink
- Non-fat dry milk powder
- Protein powder
- Low-fat cream soup
- Malt-O-Meal (unflavored)
- Cream of Wheat (unflavored)
- Cream of Rice
- 100% vegetable juice
- Diluted and pulp-free juice
- Herbal tea
- Crystal Light
- Sugar-free Kool-Aid
- Sugar-free Popsicles



Stage 3 - Pureed Foods (day 14 to day 27)

You will start a pureed diet 14 days after surgery.

You will stay on this diet for about two weeks.

Goals:

- Add more food choices. Foods are blended (pureed), so they are the same thickness as applesauce. This will reduce the risk of nausea and vomiting.
- Meals should be about 1/2 to 3/4 cup of food.
- Keep drinking enough liquids. Remember to stop liquids 30 minutes before your meals. Wait 30 minutes after eating to start liquids again.

Tips:

- Add new foods slowly. Try one new food at a time.
- At first, you may only be able to handle 1 to 2 tablespoons at a time. You may want to use a small saucer and a baby spoon. Slowly increase your food until you are eating 1/2 to 3/4 cup of food at each meal.
- Eat the protein part of your meal first.
- You may need to add protein powder to your food. Your goal is at least 60 grams of protein per day.
- If you cannot handle food early in the morning, try an approved protein drink.

Suggested Proteins:

- Skim or 1% milk
- Approved protein drink (see page 3 for details)
- Low-calorie yogurt (no chunks of fruit)
- Low-fat cottage or ricotta cheese, mashed with a fork
- Mashed eggs (poached, soft boiled or scrambled) or mashed egg substitute
- Mashed tofu
- Pureed lean beef, lean pork, chicken, turkey or fish (or use baby food meats)
- Mashed beans (such as black beans, pinto beans or fat-free refried beans)
- Pureed chili

Suggested Grains and Starches:

- Hot cereals (Cream of Wheat, Cream of Rice, Malt-O-Meal, oatmeal, grits)
- Mashed potatoes, sweet potatoes or winter squash

Sample Menu for a Pureed Diet

Breakfast

- ¼ cup oatmeal, thinned
- ¼ cup low-calorie smooth yogurt

Lunch

- ¼ cup cottage cheese
- ¼ cup sugar-free pudding

Dinner

- ¼ cup pureed chicken
- ¼ cup low-calorie smooth yogurt

Liquids Between Meals (throughout the day)

Total of 6 to 8 cups (48 to 64 ounces) of fluids per day. Choose water or sugar-free drinks.

Suggested Fruits and Vegetables:

- Plain applesauce (no added sugar)
- Mashed bananas
- Pureed peaches, pears, apricots or other pureed fruit
- Pureed carrots, green beans, beets or other pureed vegetables



“It always seems impossible until it is done.”

– Nelson Mandela

Stage 4 - Soft Foods (day 28)

If your body can handle pureed foods, you will progress to solid foods. Foods should be soft, moist, and tender. It is important to choose low-fat and low-sugar foods.

Goals:

- Choose soft protein foods. Eat at least 60 grams of protein each day.
- Choose soft fruits and vegetables.
- Stop eating when you feel satisfied.
- Meals should be a total of 1/2 to 3/4 cup.
- Keep drinking at least 6 to 8 cups (48 to 64 ounces) of liquid per day.

Tips:

- Add new foods slowly. You may have problems with some foods more than others. Take small bites and chew all food well. (Chew each bite 20 to 30 times before you swallow to make sure the food is roughly applesauce consistency.)
- Always eat the protein part of your meal first.
- Prepare meats using low-fat cooking methods (baking, broiling or grilling).
- Use herbs and spices to season vegetables.

Suggested Proteins:

- Tuna fish, salmon or white fish
- Shrimp, lobster or crab
- Tender, moist lean meats
- Lean ground beef or turkey
- Deli-sliced turkey breast, chicken, ham, roast beef
- Egg, chicken or tuna salad (use low-fat or fat-free mayo, salad dressing or plain yogurt)
- Low-fat cheese (such as part-skim mozzarella)
- Hard-boiled, poached, soft-cooked or scrambled eggs

- Tofu
- Mashed or well-cooked beans (such as black or pinto)

Suggested Grains and Starches:

- Mashed or baked potatoes or sweet potatoes
- Hot cereal or cereal soaked in milk (choose high-fiber cereals)
- Low-fat crackers
- Toast

Suggested Fruits and Vegetables:

- Canned peaches or pears (packed in water or juice, not syrup)
- Thawed frozen berries (plain, no syrup)
- Bananas
- Plain applesauce (no added sugar)
- Mandarin oranges
- Soft melon
- Soft, well-cooked vegetables (carrots, green beans, squash, beets, broccoli florets)

Sample Menu for Soft Diet

Breakfast

1 soft-cooked egg
¼ cup soft fruit

Lunch

2 ounces tuna (mixed with fat-free mayo)
¼ cup cooked carrots
¼ cup sugar-free pudding

Dinner

2 ounces chicken
¼ cup cooked broccoli florets
¼ cup low-calorie yogurt

Liquids Between Meals (throughout the day)

Total of 6 to 8 cups (48 to 64 ounces) of fluids per day. Choose water or sugar-free drinks.



Stage 5 - Regular Foods (8–12 weeks)

Starting 8 to 12 weeks after surgery, you can eat most foods. Follow the same goals and tips as in stage 4. Only eat foods that contain nutrients and avoid junk foods.

Foods you May Not Be Able to Eat:

Some foods may cause problems. This will vary from person to person. The following foods are more likely to cause problems:

- Tough meat: Use a marinade or tenderizer.
- Fresh bread: Eat toast slices instead.
- Stringy vegetables: Blend and strain to remove hard-to-digest fiber.
- Oranges and grapefruit: Remove the white membranes.
- Skins of fruits and vegetables: Peel apples, pears and potatoes.
- Coconut: Avoid this.
- Milk products: Use soymilk or low-lactose milk, such as Lactaid.
- Sugar: Avoid high-sugar foods.

Remember:

- Follow your diet as your surgeon and dietitian have told you.
- Chew foods until they are the thickness of applesauce.
- Stop eating the moment you start to feel satisfied.
- Take 30 minutes to eat your meals.
- Drink 6 to 8 cups (48 to 64 ounces) of liquid each day.
- You may vomit (throw up) from time to time as you move from liquids to solid foods.
- Crush large pills and tablets for the first 1 or 2 months after surgery.
- Try one new food at a time.
- Eat three meals per day. Try to eat at the same times each day.

If you vomit, stop drinking and eating until you feel better. Then, drink liquids before you try to eat solid foods. **If vomiting persists, you must go to the emergency room.**



“Let food be thy medicine and medicine be thy food.”

- Hippocrates



Vitamin and Mineral Supplements

You will need to take extra vitamins and minerals **for the rest of your life.** You can buy these vitamins and minerals at your local drug or supplement store.

If your body cannot handle them, you may need to change your dosage and/or type of vitamin supplement.

Multivitamin with Minerals

Your multivitamin with minerals should have all of the following:

- at least 18 mg of iron
- at least 400 mcg of folic acid
- at least 2 mg of copper
- at least 1.5 mg of thiamin

Choose one type:

- Children's complete chewable multi-vitamin with minerals.

OR...

- Adult complete multivitamin with minerals.

Take twice the adult dose listed on the label each day.

Start with a chewable or liquid form. You may switch to whole tablets when your body can handle them.

Vitamin D

Take at least a total of 3000 IU (international units) of vitamin D each day. You may take it with your calcium.

Calcium

Take 1200 to 1500 mg of calcium each day.

Choose a brand that includes vitamin D.

Calcium citrate is best. If you cannot find this, take calcium carbonate instead.

- If you take calcium carbonate, take it with food.
- Take no more than 500 to 600 mg of calcium at one time. Your body can only take in this amount at once.
- Do not take your calcium within 2 hours of your multivitamin or iron supplement.

Vitamin B12

- Take 1 tablet of vitamin B12 (1000 mcg) each day. Buy the kind that goes under your tongue.

OR...

- Take 1 shot (injection) of vitamin B12 (1000 mcg) each month.

Iron

Take iron if you are a woman who gets her periods, or if your care team asks you to. Choose one of the following:

- Take 1 tablet of Vitron C each day (includes vitamin C to help you absorb the iron).

OR...

- Take both daily:
 - 1 tablet of ferrous sulfate (325 mg) and
 - 1 tablet of vitamin C chewable (500 mg).

Avoid drinking a lot of tea. **Tea contains tannins**, which reduces the amount of iron your body can use.



Sample Schedule for Vitamins and Minerals



Morning

Twice the adult dose multivitamin with minerals

Vitron C or 325 mg ferrous sulfate with vitamin C

1000 mcg B12 (if taken under the tongue)



Midmorning

500 to 600 mg calcium that has vitamin D



Evening

500 to 600 mg calcium that has vitamin D



Bedtime

2000 to 3000 IU vitamin D

500 to 600 mg calcium that has vitamin D



How to Treat or Prevent Problems

Nausea and Vomiting (feeling sick to your stomach or throwing up)

- Eat and drink more slowly.
- Chew your food more.
- If you feel sick after eating a new food, wait a few days before trying it again. You may have to go back to liquids or pureed foods for a while.

Dumping Syndrome

Dumping syndrome occurs in patients who have had gastric bypass when food moves out of the stomach too quickly, irritating your bowels (intestines). It can cause nausea (feeling sick to your stomach), diarrhea (loose stools), weakness, a fast pulse and cold sweats. These symptoms will go away, but they are not pleasant. **To prevent them:**

- Do not drink liquids for 30 minutes before or after meals.
- Do not eat sweets, such as soda pop, ice cream, or candy.

Late Dumping

This may happen 1 to 3 hours after eating. It happens when you have too much simple carbohydrate (pasta, rice, potatoes) during a meal. This causes your blood sugar to drop. You may get hungry and want to eat again. Some people will faint. Talk to your dietitian about dietary changes to prevent this.

Dehydration (loss of water in the body)

This can happen if:

- You don't drink enough fluids.
- You keep throwing up, having diarrhea, or feeling sick to your stomach.

To prevent this, drink at least 6 cups (48 ounces) of liquid each day.

Pain in the Shoulder or Upper Chest

This may occur when you eat too much, too fast, or when you eat something that is hard to digest.

If it happens while eating, stop and wait. Try to eat again after the pain is gone.

Lactose Intolerance

Symptoms may occur after you eat or drink milk products. They include diarrhea, bloating, and stomach pain.

- Take lactase enzyme tablets.
- Try lactose-free drinks such as soymilk, Lactaid, or Dairy Ease milk.

Bloating

- Drink only 2 ounces of liquid at one time.
- Sip slowly.

Constipation (hard stools)

This may happen in the first month after surgery. It should go away as you begin to eat solid foods.

- Eat foods that are higher in fiber (fruits, vegetables, beans, whole grains).
- Drink 6 to 8 cups (48 to 64 ounces) of liquids each day.
- Exercise each day.
- Ask your doctor or dietitian about using a fiber supplement.

Diarrhea (loose stools)

- Limit high-sugar foods, greasy foods, milk and milk products, and foods that are very hot or cold.
- Eat smaller meals.
- Sip fluids between meals.
- Eat more slowly.

Stretching of the Stomach

- Eat small portions of food.
- Follow your diet plan. Slowly move from liquids to pureed foods to solids.
- Avoid soda pop and other carbonated (fizzy) drinks.

Heartburn

- Avoid soda pop and other carbonated (fizzy) drinks.
- Avoid very cold liquids.
- Do not use a straw, chew gum or suck on mints.
- Limit gassy or greasy foods.
- Stay upright for 30 to 60 minutes after eating.
- Avoid eating for at least two hours before going to bed.

Blockage of the Stomach Outlet

If a large piece of food blocks the stomach outlet, you might throw up, feel pain, or feel sick to your stomach. If symptoms persist, call your doctor.

- Chew your foods well.
- Do not move to the next stage of your diet until your doctor, nurse or dietitian tells you to.