

Good Nutrition After Weight Loss Surgery

Bariatric surgery works by allowing you to eat less and in some cases to make you absorb less of what you eat. It is there to help you, but it cannot make choices for you. Weight loss surgery makes it more difficult for you to eat the way you did before surgery. Nutrition is extremely important for the long-term maintenance of weight loss resulting from the surgery.

How to use eat after bariatric surgery

Sleeve gastrectomy and gastric bypass both make your stomach volume significantly smaller, allowing you to eat less and still feel full. It is important to eat solid foods that will make you feel full (once approved by your physician). If you choose foods that easily empty from your stomach pouch (things that “melt in your mouth” if will slow your weight loss. Liquids and softer foods will not stay in your new stomach pouch as long and you will become hungry again shortly after eating. This can commonly result in slowed weight loss and weight regain.

Where Nutrition Fits

As you will not be able to eat as much, good nutrition is even more important! Making your food choices count is key. Choose foods rich in nutrients but low in calories. Choose solid foods like meats, vegetables, fruits, and whole grains that will stay in your pouch over foods that will easily slide through and not help you feel full longer. An empty pouch is a hungry pouch, which can lead to weight gain.

Commit to exercise! You will thank yourself later!

Getting regular exercise is a vital part of sustained weight loss. A good goal is 30 minutes of activity 5 days a week, or 10,000 steps (2,000 steps = 1 mile). Weight loss is a marathon, not a race, so begin slowly to assess your comfort level, and then gradually increase your activity level over time. Be sure to stay hydrated! Exercise will consume energy and calories, and it will improve your physical and psychological health. It may be hard to exercise at first due to excess weight, but the surgery will help. As you lose weight, it will become easier! Take advantage of this! Walking and water aerobics are great activities to begin with. As you get more fit, add more strenuous activities such as cycling or jogging.

Vitamins

It is extremely important that you take vitamins for life after bariatric surgery. All bariatric patients regardless of which operation they have should take a multi-vitamin daily for life. We also recommend daily Calcium citrate and vitamin D supplementation. Gastric bypass patients do not absorb Iron, calcium, Vitamin D, and Vitamin B 12 very well, so it is encouraged that these patients supplement these vitamins as well. Your vitamin levels will need to be checked every three months during the first year after surgery to ensure you do not have any vitamin deficiencies. After a year, it is reasonable to monitor your levels annually, as you should not have as much fluctuation as you get further out from surgery. If you have any questions about what to take or how much to take, you can always call your surgeon or nutritionist!

Successful Commitments After Weight Loss Surgery

- Eat solid foods (beef, chicken, fish, pork, veggies, fruit) at EVERY meal
- Eat protein first at every meal
- Avoid soft foods once cleared by your surgeon (cereal, mashed potatoes, peanut butter)
- If hungry between meals, choose solid food
- Try not to drink your calories! (Alcohol, sodas, Gatorade, juice)
- Avoid sugar
- Take small bites of food and chew at least 10 times before swallowing
- Do not drink 30 minutes prior, during, or after meals
- Put all food on a small plate and sit down to eat
- Avoid carbonated beverages
- Only eat when hungry (avoid bored snacking)
- Take the time to take care of yourself and plan healthy food choices (meal preparation for the day or week is a great way to control calories and make healthy choices)
- Exercise 30 minutes a day five times a week
- Take multivitamin with iron daily and calcium citrate with vitamin D twice a day
- Keep a food and exercise diary (MyFitnessPal is free smart phone app and very user friendly)
- Come in regularly and attend support groups- especially when struggling.
- If you fall off the wagon, forgive yourself and start over at the next meal!

Stages of Your Diet After Surgery

Phase 1 (Liquids): Weeks 1&2 After Surgery

- When you go home from the hospital, you will be on liquids only
- You will need to drink at least 3 servings of nutritionally balanced protein shakes
- You will also need to drink at least 24 ounces of fluids such as water or Crystal Light for hydration. Please drink more if you are able to consume more fluids

Phase 2 (Soft): Week 2-4 After Surgery

- After you come to clinic for your first postop check, you will be advanced to this phase
- Incorporate soft moist healthy foods along with your protein drinks
- Examples :fish, ground beef, cooked veggies, berries, citrus fruit

Phase 3 (Solids): Life Long Nutrition

- You will be advanced to this at your one month clinic appointment.
- High protein, low fat, low calorie diet
- This is a not a “diet”, but you new way of life

Stage of Diet	What to Eat	Amount to Eat
Preop (2 weeks before surgery)	High protein diet, sugar free liquids	High protein low calorie drink, water, 1 sensible meal
Day Before Surgery	Full liquids only, nothing after midnight	Protein shakes, water, broths, sugar free jello
Surgery	Surgery	Surgery
Phase 1 (1-2 weeks after surgery)	Full liquids	At least 3 servings protein shakes, 24 oz water, broths, sugar free jello
Phase 2 (3-4 weeks after surgery)	Soft foods and full liquids	¼ cup servings of soft foods. Continue full liquids
Phase 3 (week 5 and beyond)	Solid foods	Four –five small meals a day, ½ cup per meal. Protein or produce for snacks