

## Nutrition Guidelines for Sleeve Gastrectomy and Gastric Bypass

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\*Expect to leave a voicemail, calls returned within  
48 hours M-F except holidays.

**Message us through patient gateway!**  
[www.patientgateway.org](http://www.patientgateway.org)

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This book is designed to help you, your family, and your friends understand how nutrition and eating will change after surgery. It is important to commit to healthy lifestyle habits for the rest of your life to be successful with surgery. It is still possible for people to overeat and gain weight after bariatric surgery. It is encouraged to start practicing healthy lifestyle changes before surgery so they will become habits you can sustain long-term!

We hope the guidelines in this book, and the support from our team, will help you to have a healthy life after surgery.

## Contents

Nutrition Class Worksheet.....	1
The Surgeries .....	5
Skills for Success .....	6
Physical Activity.....	7
Getting Ready for Surgery .....	8
2-Week Pre-Surgery Diet.....	9
Post-Op Diet Stage 1: Fluids.....	10
Post-Op Diet Stage 2: Full Liquids.....	11
Post-Op Diet Stage 3: Smooth Textures .....	13
Post-Op Diet Stage 3: Vitamin Supplements.....	15
Post-Op Diet Stage 4: Soft Textures.....	16
Post-Op Diet Stage 5: Regular Textures.....	19
Serving Sizes.....	24
Possible Problems & Solutions.....	30
Frequently Asked Questions.....	32

## Your Typical Dietitian Appointment Schedule

Individual appointments are 30 minutes; groups and classes are 45-60 minutes.

### Before Surgery:

- Nutrition Class
- Nutrition Assessment\*  
\*Please have completed the "Nutrition Worksheet" prior to this appointment (pages 1-4 below)
- Nutrition Follow-Ups as needed

### After Surgery

- 2-3 weeks (group session)
- 3 months
- 6 months
- 9 months
- 1 year
- After 1 year, meet with dietitian twice per year (every 6 months) forever

# Nutrition Class Worksheet

After your nutrition class, keep a food log for 3 days (see example page 4) and complete the questions below (pages 1-4) to review at your 1<sup>st</sup> individual nutrition visit.

*This form is fillable or print / complete by hand.*

**1. After surgery, when is your first nutrition appointment (hint: virtual, group)?**

- 2-3 weeks post-op
- 6-8 weeks post-op
- 3 months post-op
- 1-year post-op

**2. List 2 eating behaviors that will help food digest more easily /prevent feeling overly full after surgery?**

- -
- -

**3. List 2 signs of dehydration:**

- -
- -

**4. Name one recommended protein shake and list it's calories, protein and added sugar amount:**

-

**5. Circle all foods that are in the protein food group (hint: refer to page 24)**

- Avocado
- Banana
- Chicken
- Chickpeas
- Eggs
- Whole wheat bread
- Green beans
- Ground beef
- Shrimp
- Spinach Salad

6. Circle all foods below that are allowed on the Stage 3: Smooth textures diet (see page 13)?

- Chili
- Greek Yogurt
- Pureed carrots
- French fries
- Oatmeal
- Steak
- Lentil or Bean Soup
- Cottage Cheese

7. Rank these groups in order of most important after surgery, from 1-4: 1 is most important, 4 is least important (hint: see stage 5, regular textures diet)

\_\_\_\_\_ Starches      \_\_\_\_\_ Protein      \_\_\_\_\_ Vegetables/Fruits      \_\_\_\_\_ Fluids

8. After surgery, how many ounces of fluid should you drink every day?

\_\_ Ounces/day

9. After surgery, how many grams of protein should you eat every day?

\_\_ Grams /day

10. Which of the following vitamins and minerals should be taken after surgery to prevent vitamin and mineral deficiencies? (Select all that apply)

- Calcium citrate and vitamin D
- Ginkgo Biloba
- "Bariatric" Multivitamin (with iron)
- Calcium carbonate
- Multivitamins without iron
- Vitamin B12

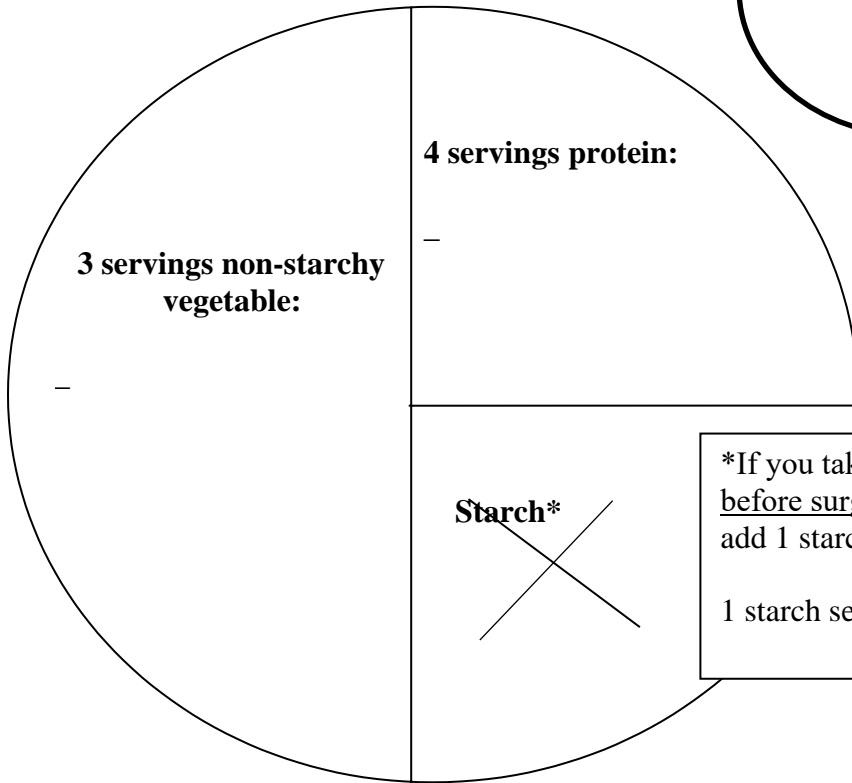
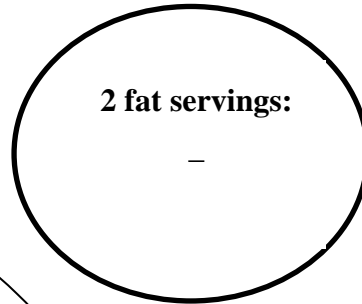
11. For best absorption, you should separate multivitamin w/ iron from calcium citrate by \_\_\_\_ hours and each calcium dose by \_\_\_\_ hours.

12. Which of the following is the purpose of the 2-week before surgery diet? (Select all that apply):

- It will prevent hair loss
- It will shrink my liver
- It will make my surgery safer
- It will clean out my stomach before surgery

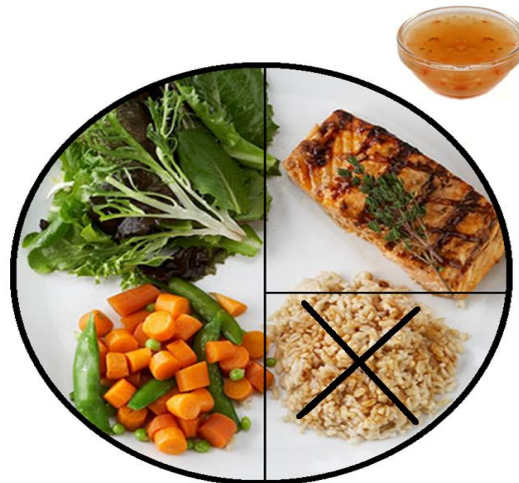
13. Plan a meal you would enjoy for your “1 daily meal” on the 2-week before surgery diet (page 9).

- Fill in the plate below with your food choices and list the serving amounts!
- Hint: use the Food group pages 24-29 to identify foods and serving sizes!



\*If you take insulin or have been given the “2 week before surgery diet for patients with diabetes” you can add 1 starch serving at this meal.

1 starch serving: \_



## Questions to help you prepare for your nutrition appointments:

1. What do you need help with to be most successful after surgery?  
—
2. Do you have any concerns following the guidelines or achieving your goals after surgery?  
—
3. What do you need to do to ensure you have enough support and time to commit to the recommended lifestyle changes?  
—
4. Do you have any food allergies or intolerances we should know about?  
—
5. Write one exercise goal you have before surgery.  
—
6. What questions do you still want to address with the dietitian?  
—

### Example food log: (complete 3 days to review with the dietitian)

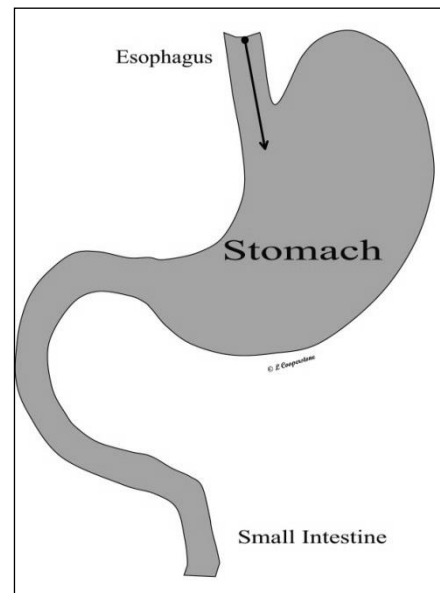
Time	Food/Preparation/Amount	Beverages	Comments
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Click or tap here to enter text.	Click or tap here to enter text.	Click or tap here to enter text.	Click or tap here to enter text.
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# The Surgeries

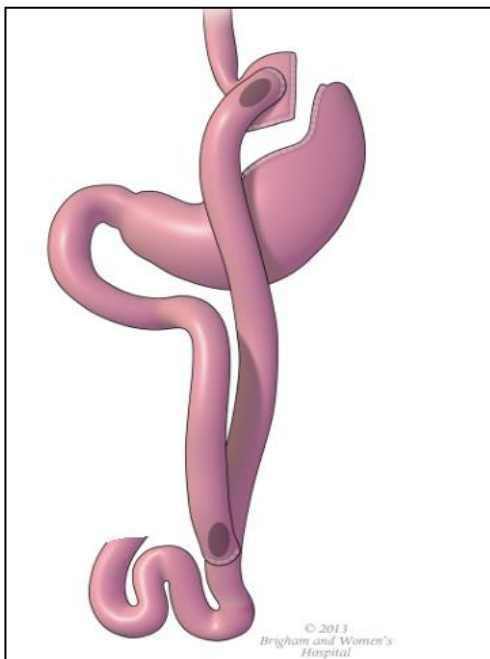
There are two main ways that gastric bypass and sleeve gastrectomy will help you to lose weight and become healthier.

- **Restriction** – Your smaller stomach will limit how much food you can eat at one time. The restriction will decrease over time so you will need to rely on healthy lifestyle habits for long-term portion control.
- **Metabolic Changes** – Stomach hormones and some other signals in your body change after surgery. This can make people feel less hungry and can help with health conditions like diabetes. Your body can adapt to this change in gut hormones over time and you will probably feel hunger again.

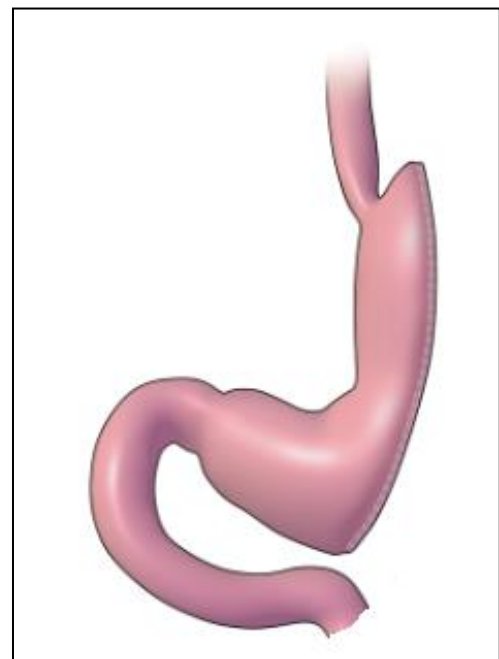
You are usually in the hospital for 1 night after sleeve gastrectomy and 1-2 nights after gastric bypass surgery.



## Gastric Bypass



## Sleeve Gastrectomy



## Dumping Syndrome

Dumping syndrome affects about half of gastric bypass patients. Dumping syndrome is the body's reaction to eating and drinking foods and beverages with added sugar, such as cakes, cookies, candies, juice, and soda. These foods or beverages pass too quickly through the stomach pouch—causing symptoms such as nausea, cramping, cold sweats, dizziness, extreme tiredness, and an increase in heart rate. Usually, the symptoms will stop in 1-2 hours. Lying down can help patients to recover. Eating high-fat foods, such as fried foods, causes similar symptoms.

Sleeve gastrectomy patients usually do not have dumping syndrome. However, all patients are encouraged to avoid foods and beverages high in fat and added sugars.

# Skills for Success

Bariatric surgery is a tool. Below are 6 skills to start practicing now for long term success!

## 1. Sip fluids throughout the day

- ✓ 48-64 ounces every day, no gulping
- ✓ Choose sugar-free, non-carbonated beverages (*see page 10 for ideas*)
- ✓ Watch for signs of dehydration: Dark colored urine, dizziness, nausea



No Caffeine  
X 6 weeks



No Alcohol  
X 12 months

## 2. Avoid eating and drinking at the same time

- ✓ Prevents getting overly full, nauseas or sick
- ✓ Wait 30 mins after your meal to start drinking again



Drink



Eat



Wait



Drink

## 3. Eat slowly, take small bites, chew to puree



Dime-sized bites  
Chew 30-40  
times

Wait 30  
seconds

Pause, see  
how your  
stomach feels



Meals should  
last 30-40  
minutes

## 4. Eat every 3-4 hours

- ✓ Schedule eating events into your day
- ✓ Avoid grazing, nibbling, and picking
- ✓ Avoid going too long without eating
- ✓ Minimize distractions while eating, engage all senses



Breakfast



Snack



Lunch



Snack



Dinner

## 5. Plan ahead

### Life will always be busy!

- ✓ Pack food and drinks for busy days
- ✓ Plan for social events
- ✓ Chop/peel ingredients in advance
- ✓ Buy pre-cut or ready to eat foods
- ✓ Include a protein source at every meal!  
(*See page 24 for ideas*)

## 6. Stay accountable

### Post-op Nutrition appointments:

- ✓ 2-3 weeks after surgery
- ✓ Every 3 months for first year
- ✓ Twice per year for life!



### Stay engaged and meet other patients\*

- ✓ Behavior + Nutrition support groups
- ✓ Private Facebook group
- ✓ Educational forums











\*Ask a dietitian how to join!



# Physical Activity

## Before Surgery

Building a habit of physical activity is more important than the type or frequency. Start moving your body in a way that feels comfortable. It's okay to break up exercise into smaller amounts throughout the day (i.e. 10 mins, 3 times per day). Remember, before beginning strenuous activities, check with your doctor.

 Walk more! Try setting a daily step goal.	 Turn up the music and dance.	 Try chair exercises.
 Make exercise a family event. Go for a walk or hike together.	 Do yard work, gardening, or household chores that require brisk movement	 Check out a new exercise class, online or at your local gym.
 For low impact, try pool exercises, water aerobics, or a stationary bicycle.	 Check out exercise apps on your phone or videos online.	 Use resistance bands or free weights to add strength activities.

## After Surgery

	Key Points	Weekly Goal	Examples
<b>Weeks 1-6</b> <i>Recovery</i>	Start slow. Listen to your body. Try and move often to prevent blood clots and promote healing. No weightlifting. Drink plenty of fluids before, during, after.	20-30 minutes of light activity daily, broken up throughout the day	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Take a walk around the house every hour</li> <li>• Light housework (dishes, dusting, fold laundry)</li> <li>• Leg lifts while sitting</li> <li>• Short walks as tolerated</li> </ul>
<b>Weeks 6-8</b> <i>Exercise Clearance</i>	You need to receive clearance from your surgeon or physician assistant around this time before resuming unrestricted exercise.	20-30 minutes of light activity daily or more as instructed by medical team	Add more minutes or frequency to exercise as able team
<b>Months 2-6</b> <i>Make it a Habit</i>	Work to build a consistent habit by scheduling activity into your week. Consider cardiovascular exercise (walk, bike, elliptical, etc.) <b>and</b> strength exercise (weights, bands, etc.).	30 minutes of low to moderate intensity exercise 5 days per week or 150 minutes total per week	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Walk, swim, or bike riding</li> <li>• Dance, Zumba, Barre</li> <li>• Yoga/Pilates</li> <li>• Light weights, resistance bands or chair exercise</li> <li>• Gardening/Yardwork</li> </ul>
<b>Months 6-18</b> <i>Build Strength &amp; Endurance</i>	By 6 months you should have more energy. Now you can start to SLOWLY increase the time and intensity of exercise. Listen to your body.	30-40 minutes of low to moderate intensity exercise 5 days per week or 200 minutes total per week. Include at least 2 days of strength training.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Longer walks, swims, bike rides</li> <li>• Walking on hills or incline</li> <li>• Aerobic or strength classes</li> <li>• Weights or resistance bands</li> </ul>
<b>Months 18+</b> <i>Maintenance</i>	Exercise after surgery may be the most important factor in achieving long-term maintenance. You need <u>more</u> exercise in maintenance than you did during the weight loss phase.	Aim for 250-300 minutes (4 hours) weekly or as little as 35-40 minutes per day. Including at least 2 days of strength training.	All of the above!

# Getting Ready for Surgery

## What to Buy



□ Measuring Cups



□ Recommended Vitamins



□ Food Scale



□ Body Weight Scale



□ Protein Shakes



□ Sugar Free Fluids

**2-Week Pre-Surgery Diet**— This diet helps shrink your liver and makes surgery safer. For 2 weeks before surgery, eat 5 times daily from selected options and drink 64 ounces of sugar free fluid. For example:

### Shake



### Snack



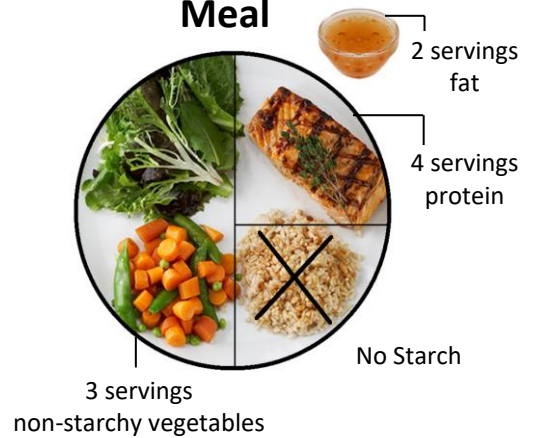
### Shake



### Snack



### Meal



See page 9 for more details on the 2-week pre-surgery diet.

**After Surgery Diet**- After surgery, follow a progressive textured diet while your stomach is healing. The following pages provide more detail for each stage.



**Stage 1:**  
Fluids



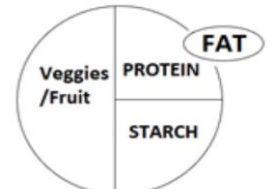
**Stage 2:**  
Full Liquids



**Stage 3:**  
Smooth Textures



**Stage 4:**  
Soft Textures



**Stage 5:**  
Regular Textures



# 2-Week Pre-Surgery Diet

Start this diet 2 weeks before your surgery date. This diet is considered low in carbohydrates, it is required and will help shrink your liver, which makes a safer and easier surgery.



If you have been told to follow the pre-op diet for diabetes, see separate handout [here!](#)

## Instructions:

- Every day consume 2 protein shakes, 2 snacks and 1 meal from the choices below.
- Separate each eating event/shake by 3-4 hours and drink fluids in between
- Drink at least 64 oz of sugar-free beverages (water, crystal light, etc)
- Do not eat bread, rice, pasta, starchy vegetables (potatoes/peas/corn/squash), sweets nor drink alcohol

## Pre-Op Diet Options:

<b>Protein shakes:</b> Drink 2 daily	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Choose from protein shake options on page 12</li> <li>• Mix powders with water, unsweetened almond /soy milk only</li> </ul>
<b>Snacks:</b> Eat 2 daily	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 1 fruit serving (i.e. 1 small apple) + 1 TBSP nut butter</li> <li>• 1 fruit serving (i.e. 15 grapes) + 1 cheese stick</li> <li>• 1/2 cup cottage cheese + 1 serving fruit (<i>see page 26 for serving sizes</i>)</li> <li>• 1 Hard boiled egg + 1 serving fruit</li> <li>• 1 container Zero Sugar Greek Yogurt + 14 almonds</li> <li>• 1/2 cup red pepper strips + 1/2 cup carrot sticks + 1/4 cup guacamole</li> <li>• 1 cup raw veggies + 3 Tbsp hummus</li> <li>• 1/4 cup dried Chickpea Snacks (e.g. Biona)</li> <li>• Select Bars: Nature Valley Protein bar OR Pure Protein Bar OR Fiber One Protein OR Power Crunch bar</li> </ul>
<b>1 Meal</b> Your daily meal should include:  <i>Use pages 24-29 for serving size suggestions</i>	<div style="display: flex; align-items: flex-start;"> <div style="flex: 1;"> </div> <div style="flex: 1; padding-left: 20px;"> <p><b>4 servings of protein:</b> 4 oz cooked/grilled chicken</p> <p><b>3 servings of nonstarchy vegetables:</b> 3 cups lettuce, tomatoes, onion</p> <p><b>2 servings of fats</b> 4 Tbsp Light Italian dressing</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><i>Find pre-op meal recipes <a href="#">here!</a></i></p> </div> </div>

**On the day of surgery:** Start drinking 1 carbohydrate drink (12oz Clearfast, or 12oz Gatorade) 3 hours before surgery and finish within 2 hours of surgery (See ["Preparing for your bariatric surgery guide"](#)).

# Post-Op Diet Stage 1: Fluids

**Starts:** Day of surgery (“day 0”) or the day after surgery (“day 1”)

**Lasts for:** Up to 1 day

## What to do:

1. Sip sugar-free, non-carbonated, non-caffeinated fluids throughout the day
  2. Watch for signs of dehydration (dark color urine, headaches, dizziness)
- 

## Appropriate fluid choices:

- Water, still/flat only
- Crystal Light, MiO, or other sugar-free flavorings
- Decaf coffee and tea
- Broth
- Fruit-flavored water (Hint Water or homemade by floating fruit in water)
- Sugar-free Jell-o
- Sugar-free popsicles
- Sugar-free sports drinks (PowerAde Zero, Propel, Gatorade Zero)
  - G2 only recommended with severe diarrhea and vomiting

## Stage 1 Key Points:

- You will be in the hospital for this diet stage. The nurses will guide you to sip fluids during the day.
- Fluid intake is the number one priority after surgery.
- You will only be able to sip small amounts of fluid at one time. Pace yourself throughout the day.
- Gulping and chugging fluids will cause stomach pain.
- Avoid caffeine until Stage 5. It irritates the stomach.
- Carbonation can cause gas, belching, bloating, and stomach discomfort. Some people never tolerate carbonation after surgery.
- You can use artificial sweeteners such as PureVia and Truvia (Stevia) and Nectresse (monk fruit), or others: Equal (Aspartame), Sweet & Low (Saccharin), Splenda (Sucralose)
- If you are experiencing gas pain or discomfort, try walking around.

# Post-Op Diet Stage 2: Full Liquids

**Starts:** Day of surgery (“day 0”) or the day after surgery (“day 1”)

**Lasts for:** 1 week

## What to do:


- 1. Aim for 48-64 oz fluids every day. Prioritize hydration before protein.**
  - Avoid caffeine, added sugars, carbonation
  - Signs of dehydration: dark urine color, lightheadedness or dizziness, and headaches
- 2. Have 60-70 grams of protein from protein shakes and allowed options below**
  - It may be challenging to get all your protein right away. Work toward this goal every day.
- 3. Monitor bowel movements. *If concerned about constipation or diarrhea, please contact us.***

## Protein options:

- Protein shakes
  - Egg whites/eggbeaters
  - Low-fat, Greek yogurt\*
  - Low-fat Plain yogurt\*
  - Low-fat Soy yogurt\*
- \*Choose yogurts with 5g or less added sugar per serving

## Non-protein options

- No added sugar/unsweetened applesauce
- Sugar-free pudding



To help you heal and avoid irritation, only choose options listed on this page.


See [Stage 2 meal ideas](#) for specific texture, ingredient and recipe descriptions.

## Choosing Protein Shakes

After Surgery, each protein shake / powder should have:

- ✓ Between 100-200 calories    ✓ 15g or more protein    ✓ 7g or less added sugar

Nutrition Facts			
Serving size		1 bottle (237 mL)	
Amount per serving		160	
Calories			
	% DV*		% DV*
Total Fat 2g	3%	Sodium 210mg	9%
Saturated Fat 0.5g	3%	Total Carb. 19g	7%
Trans Fat 0g		Dietary Fiber <1g	<3%
Polyunsaturated Fat 0.5g		Total Sugars 4g	
Monounsaturated Fat 1g		Incl. 4g Added Sugars	7%
Cholesterol 20mg	7%	Protein 16g	32%



1 scoop protein powder  
Calories = 130  
Protein = 24 g  
Sugar = 2 g

8 oz unsweetened almond milk  
Calories = 30  
Protein = 1 g  
Sugar = 0 g

Protein shake  
Calories = 160  
Protein = 25 g  
Sugar = 2 g

# Post-Op Diet Stage 2: Full Liquids (continued)

## Protein Shake Shopping Guide

- We recommend taste-testing shakes before surgery
- Choose shakes from this list for your pre-op diet protein shake options too

Suitable for lactose intolerance:	Contains lactose:
Ensure <a href="#">Max*</a> , <a href="#">Plant Protein Shake</a> , <a href="#">High Protein*</a>	<a href="#">Premier Protein*</a> Ready-to-drink OR Powder
<a href="#">Fairlife Nutrition Plan*</a> OR <a href="#">Core Power*</a>	<a href="#">Muscle Milk</a> “Genuine” powder
<a href="#">GNC Lean Shake 25*</a> Ready-To-Drink	<a href="#">Pure Protein</a> Ready-to-Drink or <a href="#">Powder</a>
<a href="#">Orgain Plant Based</a> Ready-to-drink	<a href="#">BOOST Max*</a> ( <i>not regular BOOST</i> )
<a href="#">Isopure Zero Carb*</a> Powders	<a href="#">Quest*</a> Ready-To-Drink
<a href="#">Premier plant protein</a> Powder	<a href="#">Slim Fast High Protein*</a> Ready-to-drink only
<a href="#">Muscle Milk “Zero” or “Genuine”</a> Ready-to-drink	<a href="#">Syntrax Matrix</a> Powders

*\* Certified Gluten Free- Please note, “cookies and cream” flavor protein shakes are not gluten free*

## Shopping Tips:

- Find protein shakes in grocery stores. Local pharmacies and online. See full shopping guide [here](#).
- “Coffee” “latte” and “energy” flavors may have caffeine, avoid until post-op diet stage 5
- Look for sales on company websites and in weekly grocery ads, ask your dietitian for discount codes!
- Powders are usually cheaper per serving than ready-to-drink options
- Buying in bulk saves costs, but remember your tastes may change after surgery

## Possible Stage 2 Problems: Call your dietitian if you need more help!

### Lactose Intolerance:

Lactose is a natural sugar in milk. After surgery, your body may not digest lactose well which may cause nausea, cramping, bloating, gas, or diarrhea. If you think you have lactose intolerance, try these tips:

- Stop drinking protein shakes for 24 hours. Keep hydrated with at least 48 oz or more stage 1 fluids.
- Restart lactose-free protein shakes:
  - Shakes with ‘whey protein **isolate**’ or plant-based protein sources should not contain lactose
  - Avoid cow’s milk and products with ingredients: “whey”, “milk **concentrate**” or, “whey blend”.

**Taste changes** may occur. Try adding your own flavors!

- Try extracts (vanilla, almond, mint etc.), sugar-free syrups (i.e. Da Vinci Gourmet or Torani brands), spices (cinnamon, ginger, nutmeg, and cloves, even hot sauce, salt/pepper or Mrs. Dash). Mix shakes or yogurts with unsweetened cocoa powder or powdered peanut butter.
- Consider unsweetened options: unflavored protein powder or chicken soup flavor (chicken broth!)

### Smell-sensory changes:

- Drink your shake from a bottle with a small opening.
- Drink your shake using a straw.
- Drink your shake at a very cold temperature or mixed with ice.

# Post-Op Diet Stage 3: Smooth Textures

**Starts:** Day 7

**Lasts for:** 1 Week

## What to Do:

1. Keep sipping fluids; Goal: 48-64 ounces daily.
2. Choose protein foods first to reach your 60 – 70 gram daily goal. Then, may include non-protein foods.
3. Based on typical portion sizes, you will need to eat 5-6 times daily, including protein shakes.
4. Start taking chewable vitamin and mineral supplements (see page 15)

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**Only choose foods listed on this page. Your stomach is still healing and other foods may be irritating. See [Stage 3 meal ideas](#) for specific texture, ingredient and recipe descriptions.**

## Protein Foods

- Egg whites or eggbeaters (no whole eggs)
- Low-fat Greek yogurt (blended or without fruit chunks) \*
- Refried beans, no meat (black / pinto, low fat)
- Low-fat cottage cheese
- Tofu
- Part-skim ricotta cheese
- Protein shakes and powders

## Other Foods

- Fat-free or light yogurt or soy-yogurts\*
- Unsweetened applesauce, canned pears or peaches (in own juice or water/no syrup)
- Soft banana
- Oatmeal, cream of wheat, farina, maicena\*
- Pureed vegetable (non-starchy: carrots, broccoli, cauliflower, green beans) without peel or seeds
- Sugar-free pudding

\*Choose yogurts and oatmeal products with less than 5g added sugar/serving

## How do I know how much protein I am eating?

It is important to keep track of how much protein you are eating. See page 24 and read nutrition labels to adjust for the amount you ate.

For example: Greek yogurt, individual container

- The serving size is “1 tub.”
- If you eat the whole container, you ate 15g protein.
- If you eat half, then you only ate half the protein half of 15 = 7.5 grams.



15 g protein



7.5 g protein

Nutrition Facts	
Serving Size 1 Tub (150g)	
Amount per Serving	
Calories 90	Fat Cal 0
%Daily Value	
<b>Total Fat</b> 0g	<b>0%</b>
Saturated Fat 0g	<b>0%</b>
Trans Fat 0g	
<b>Cholesterol</b> <5mg	<b>1%</b>
<b>Sodium</b> 60mg	<b>3%</b>
<b>Potassium</b> 210mg	<b>6%</b>
<b>Total Carbohydrate</b> 7g	<b>2%</b>
Dietary Fiber 0g	<b>0%</b>
Sugars 5g	
<b>Protein</b> 15g	<b>30%</b>
Vitamin A 0%	Vitamin C 0%
Calcium 15%	Iron 0%

# Post-Op Diet Stage 3: Smooth Textures (Example Day)



**8am: Breakfast**  
Oatmeal with  
¼ scoop protein powder  
**=7 grams protein**



**10am: Snack #1**  
Protein shake  
**= 30 grams protein**



Remember to sip fluids between meals/snacks. Wait 30 minutes after eating to drink.



**12pm: Lunch**  
2 Egg White  
Omelet  
**= 6 grams protein**

You might not be hungry but still eat every 3-4 hours.



**3pm: Snack #2**  
¼ cup Cottage Cheese  
with Chives  
**=7 grams protein**

Foods do not have to be bland. Add seasonings and spices.




**6pm: Dinner**  
1.5 ounces Tofu  
**=6 grams protein**

Stop eating at the first sign of fullness (see right).



**8pm: Snack #3**  
¼ cup Greek Yogurt  
**=7 grams protein**

  
**Signs of Fullness**  
chest pressure  
runny nose  
hiccups  
watery eyes  
nausea

**Daily Total**  
**= 63 grams protein**



# Post-Op Diet Stage 3: Vitamin Supplements

Many changes after surgery (i.e., eating less and absorption changes) put you at an increased risk for vitamin deficiencies, which can become more severe over time.

**You will need to take the following vitamins every day, for life:**

1. "Bariatric" Multivitamin with  $\geq 36$  mg Iron
2. 1200-1500 mg Calcium Citrate, taken as 500-600 mg doses, 2-3 times daily\*
3. 350-500 mcg B12

**Start chewable vitamins at Week 2.** After week 5, you can switch to non-chewable vitamins.

## Multivitamin Options: Choose 1, add additional vitamins if listed

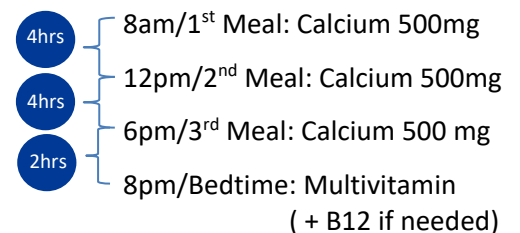
	Dose	Avg. Monthly Cost
1. <a href="#">Bariatric Fusion Complete All in One</a> <i>Do not need additional vitamins</i>	1 tab, 4 times daily	\$27
2. <a href="#">Bariatric Choice All in One</a> <i>Do not need additional vitamins</i>	1 wafer, 4 times daily	\$28
3. <a href="#">Bariatric Advantage Ultra Solo with iron*</a> <i>Also need: calcium citrate</i>	1 multivitamin daily	\$25
4. Flintstones <a href="#">Complete</a> , Equate <a href="#">Kids</a> , Target <a href="#">Kids</a> <i>Also need: B12 and calcium citrate</i>	2 tablets, once daily	\$5

## Additional Vitamins, as needed

Vitamin B12: <a href="#">500 mcg Vitamin B12</a>	1 lozenge, once daily	\$1
Calcium Tablets: <a href="#">Opurity Calcium Chewable</a>	2 tabs, twice daily	\$17
Calcium Soft chews/chewy bites: <a href="#">Bariatric advantage</a> , <a href="#">Bariatric Pal</a> , <a href="#">Celebrate</a>	1 chew 3 times daily	\$25-35
Liquid Calcium: <a href="#">Nature's way liquid calcium citrate</a> At local pharmacies, supermarkets and online	1 Tbsp 3 times daily	\$20

- **\*Do not take vitamins all at once.** Separate calcium doses by 4 hours and take 2 hours away from the multivitamin.
  - Try alarms, pill boxes, and reminders to help you
- Ask us about insurance coverage, discount codes and vitamin samples. \*Bariatric Advantage 15% discount code: **BWHC**
- Having trouble with your chewable vitamin? Talk to your dietitian about a small, nonchewable option: [Naturemade Multi](#): 2 daily (requires additional 500 mcg B12).
- Nonchewable vitamins are otherwise recommended starting at Stage 5 (5 weeks) after surgery.

### Example Vitamin Schedule



# Post-Op Diet Stage 4: Soft Textures

**Starts:** Day 14 / At week 2

**Lasts for:** 3 weeks

## What to Do:

1. Keep sipping fluids. Goal: 48-64 ounces daily
2. Have a protein shake or eat a protein food 5-6 times per day (minimum 60-70 grams daily)
3. Keep taking vitamin and mineral supplements

---

*Only choose foods listed on this page. Your stomach is still healing, other foods may be irritating.  
See [Stage 4 meal ideas](#) for specific texture, ingredient and recipe descriptions.*

## Protein Foods

- Egg, egg whites, or egg beaters
- Fat-free Greek yogurt (without fruit chunks)
- Low-fat cottage cheese
- Part-skim ricotta cheese
- Tofu
- Chicken or turkey (dark meat is fine)
- Fish (flaky fish like tuna, cod, haddock, salmon, and tilapia)
- Veggie burger
- Beans and lentils
- Protein shakes or powders

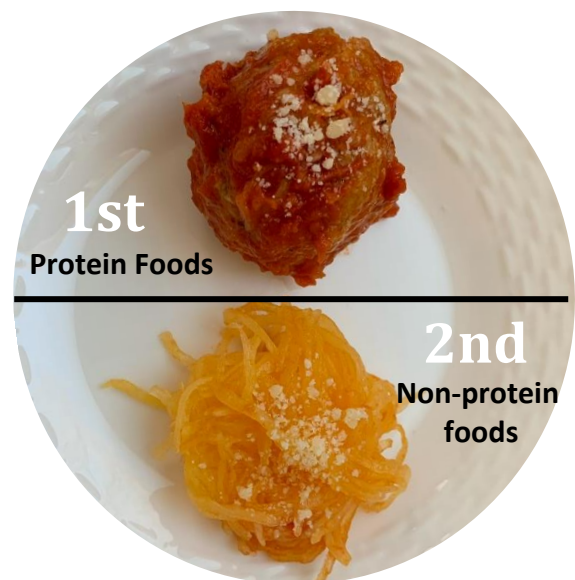
## Other Foods

- Well-cooked non-starchy or starchy vegetables with no skins or peels
- Canned fruit/ applesauce (unsweetened, in own juice or water, no syrup)
- Fresh fruits: try soft first, avoid skins & peels
- Tomato sauce
- Fat-free or light yogurt (non-Greek)
- Reduced-fat or light cheese
- Oatmeal, cream of wheat, or farina, maicena

## Fats

- Light mayonnaise or salad dressing
- Hummus
- Avocado
- Smooth nut butter (not crunchy)
- Butter or oil

## Example Plate – it might be this small!



**How to Count Grams of Protein**  
(if the food does not have a nutrition label)

**7 grams of protein =**

1 ounce chicken/turkey/fish

1 egg

¼ cup egg substitute

2 oz firm tofu / 3 oz soft tofu

½ cup beans

See page 24 for more details

# Post-Op Diet Stage 4: Soft Textures (Example Day)



Eat foods that are “fork mashable” – foods that are too tough or dry can be hard to tolerate.

**8am: Breakfast**  
1 egg + 1 TBSP spinach  
**= 7 grams protein**



Remember to sip fluids between meals/snacks. Wait 30 minutes after eating to drink.



Chew until your food is pureed by your teeth.

**12pm: Lunch**  
1.5 ounces Turkey Chili  
**= 6 grams protein**

**10am: Snack #1**  
Protein shake  
**= 30 grams protein**



Eat slow – take 30 minutes for each eating event, pause after each bite



Keep meat tender and moist – use a slow cooker, marinate meats, cook in foil packets, don't over-cook. Use broth when reheating meat in the microwave.

**6pm: Dinner**  
1 oz chicken  
+ ¼ cup peppers  
+ 1 Tbsp avocado  
**= 7 grams protein**

**3pm: Snack #2**  
1/2 cup Greek yogurt  
+ ¼ banana  
**= 10 grams protein**

**Daily Total**  
**= 60 grams protein**



## Food Feel Stuck?

Do not panic.  
Do NOT drink water.  
Stay calm, move around, it will pass.

## Post-Op Diet Stage 4: Soft Textures (Key Points)

- Think “fork-mashable” for the appropriate texture. If the food can be mashed easily with a fork, it’s probably soft enough to eat in this stage.
- You might not feel hungry but you still need to eat regularly. Space eating events evenly during the day, about every 3-4 hours. Set reminders or timers to help you remember to eat if helpful!
- Some days you won’t have room for everything. Do your best to reach your protein goal first.
- If food feels like it is “stuck”,
  - **Do not panic and do not drink water.**
  - Stay calm, move around, and it will pass.

After the sensation passes, think about what may have gone wrong...

- **Ate too fast?** Take 30 minutes for each eating event and pause after each bite.
  - **Didn’t chew enough?** Chew until your food is pureed by your teeth.
  - **Food too tough?** Make sure you are only eating foods from stages 4 and earlier.
  - **Food too dry?** Dry foods may be hard to tolerate. Keep meat tender and moist.
    - Use a slow cooker, marinate meats, cook in foil packets, avoid over-cooking.
    - Add broth when reheating meat in the microwave to keep it moist.
  - **Too full?** Try to stop before you get “over-full” which can feel like chest pressure or nausea.
- Dehydration can still happen. You are likely getting back to your daily routine and will be busy. Remember to drink your fluids in between eating times.
  - You may not tolerate certain textures the first time you try them. If you have trouble with a food even when you are eating very carefully, avoid the food for 2-3 weeks before trying again.

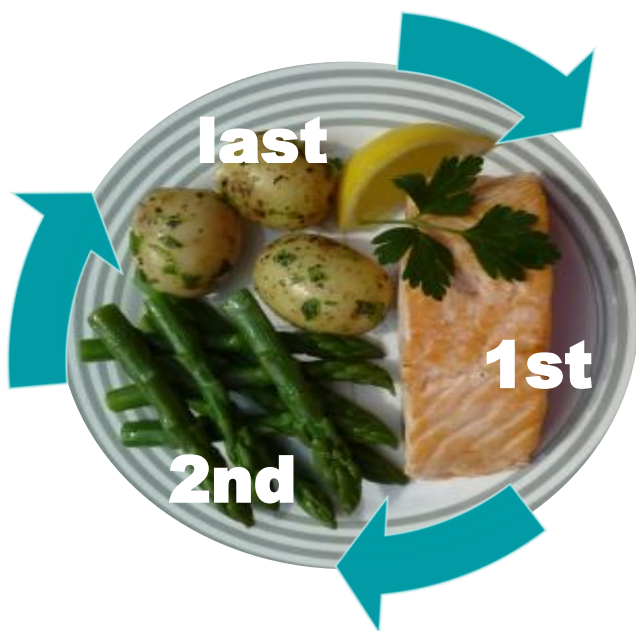
# Post-Op Diet Stage 5: Regular Textures

**Starts:** Day 35 / At week 5

**Last for:** Forever, but your meal plan may change over time.

## What to Do:

1. Keep sipping at least 48-64 ounces daily (continue sugar free, non-carbonated choices)
2. Focus on protein at meals (protein goal is at least 60-70grams daily)
3. Use this meal plan as a guide for a balanced diet; all food groups can be included over time
4. Keep taking vitamin and mineral supplements; you can change to pill form if you prefer



**Remember to stay hydrated first!**

**At mealtimes, start with protein and as you tolerate, add in other food groups.**

**Follow this order of importance:**

Fluids 1<sup>st</sup>

Proteins 2<sup>nd</sup>

Vegetable/fruits 3<sup>rd</sup>

Starches, 4<sup>th</sup>

## How do I start in Stage 5?

In Stage 5, you may not tolerate every food you try. Be patient with your stomach. Tolerance usually improves over time. See below for possible 'problem foods' to help guide your choices. See [Stage 5 Meal Ideas](#) for more ideas!

### Possible 'Problem Foods'

Your stomach can be sensitive for 3-6 months after surgery, sometimes longer. The following foods have unique textures that may be difficult to tolerate if eaten too soon. Be cautious!

**Protein:** Tough red meat, hamburger, fatty meats (salami, sausage, chorizo) lobster, scallops, clams, shrimp

**Fruits:** Stringy, thick skins, peels (like oranges, grapes, pineapple)

**Vegetables:** Stringy, fibrous (like asparagus, peapods, celery, lettuces, yuca)

**Starches:** Rice, pasta, doughy breads, popcorn

## Post-Op Diet Stage 5: Portion Size Suggestions

As you heal, the amount of food you can eat at one meal will increase over time. Do not worry if you are eating slightly more or less. Remember, stop eating before getting overly full or uncomfortable to create healthy eating habits for long-term success!

### Month 1



**2-4 TBSP per meal**

*Shown: 1 ounce chicken*

### Month 3



**1/4- 1/3 cup per meal**

*Shown: 1 ounce chicken + 1/4 cup broccoli*

### Month 6



**1/2-3/4 cup per meal**

*Shown: 2 ounces chicken + 1/2 cup broccoli  
+ 2 tablespoons rice*

### Month 12+



**1-1 1/2 cup per meal**

*Shown: 3 ounce chicken + 1/2 cup broccoli  
+ 1/2 cup salad + 1/4 cup rice*

# Post-Op Diet Stage 5: Meal Plan









Use the meal plan to guide your choices throughout the day. Each checkbox is a serving of food from that food group. Use pages 24-29 for additional foods and serving sizes of each food group.

- 8 protein servings
- 2 vegetable servings
- 2 fruit servings
- 1 dairy serving
- 2 fat servings
- 3 starch servings



This meal plan is not one size fits all. Ask your dietitian to help individualize!

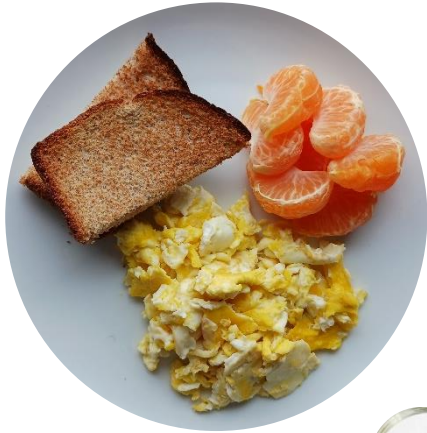
## Serving Size Quick Guide

<b>Protein</b>	Chicken, fish, beef, pork, tofu, etc. <b>Page 24</b>	 <b>2 ounces</b> (2 servings)  <b>4 ounces</b> (4 servings) <p><i>*portion depends on tolerance</i></p>
<b>Vegetables</b>	Broccoli, cauliflower, carrots, peppers, green beans, onions, zucchini, salad etc. <b>Page 25</b>	 <b>½ cup</b> Cooked vegetables  <b>1 cup</b> Raw vegetables
<b>Fruits</b>	Apples, berries, oranges, mango, melons, etc. <b>Page 26</b>	 <b>1 cup</b>
<b>Fats</b>	Salad dressing, avocado, peanut butter, nuts/seeds, oils, butter, etc. <b>Page 28</b>	 <b>1 Tbsp</b> Dressings, nut butter, hummus, avocado  <b>1 Tsp</b> Oil, butter, mayo
<b>Starch</b>	Rice, pasta, quinoa, potatoes, hot cereals, etc. <b>Page 29</b>	 <b>½ cup</b> Cooked starch

# Post-Op Diet Stage 5: Example Day ~12 months post-op

By 12 months, many people can eat all the servings provided in the meal plan but this will vary based on your individual stomach capacity.

- 8 protein servings ☒☒☒☒☒☒☒☒
- 2 vegetable servings ☒☒
- 2 fruit servings ☒☒
- 1 dairy serving ☒
- 2 fat servings ☒
- 3 starch servings ☒☒☒



## BREAKFAST

- 2 eggs (2 protein serving)
- 1 clementine (1 fruit serving)
- 1 toast (1 starch serving)
- 1 ounce cheese (1 dairy serving)



## LUNCH

- 2 ounces deli turkey (2 protein servings)
- 1 cup peppers (1 vegetable serving)
- 2 Tbsp hummus (1 fat serving)
- 1 ounce pretzels (1 starch serving)



## SNACK

- 1 apple (1 fruit serving)
- 2 Tsp peanut butter (1 fat serving)



## DINNER

- 4 ounce chicken (4 protein servings)
- ½ cup broccoli (1 vegetable serving)
- ½ cup potato (1 starch serving)



# Post-Op Diet Stage 5: Regular Textures (Meal Planner)

Use this meal planning worksheet to plan your individual eating schedule or track your food intake. Keep track of fluid and protein to help hit your minimum goals of 64 ounces fluid and 60-70 grams protein!

8 cups of fluid

8 protein servings

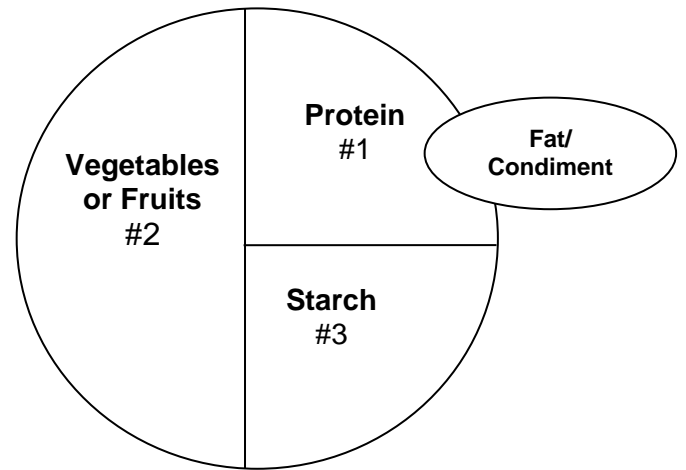
2 vegetable servings

2 fruit servings

1 dairy serving

2 fat servings

3 starch servings

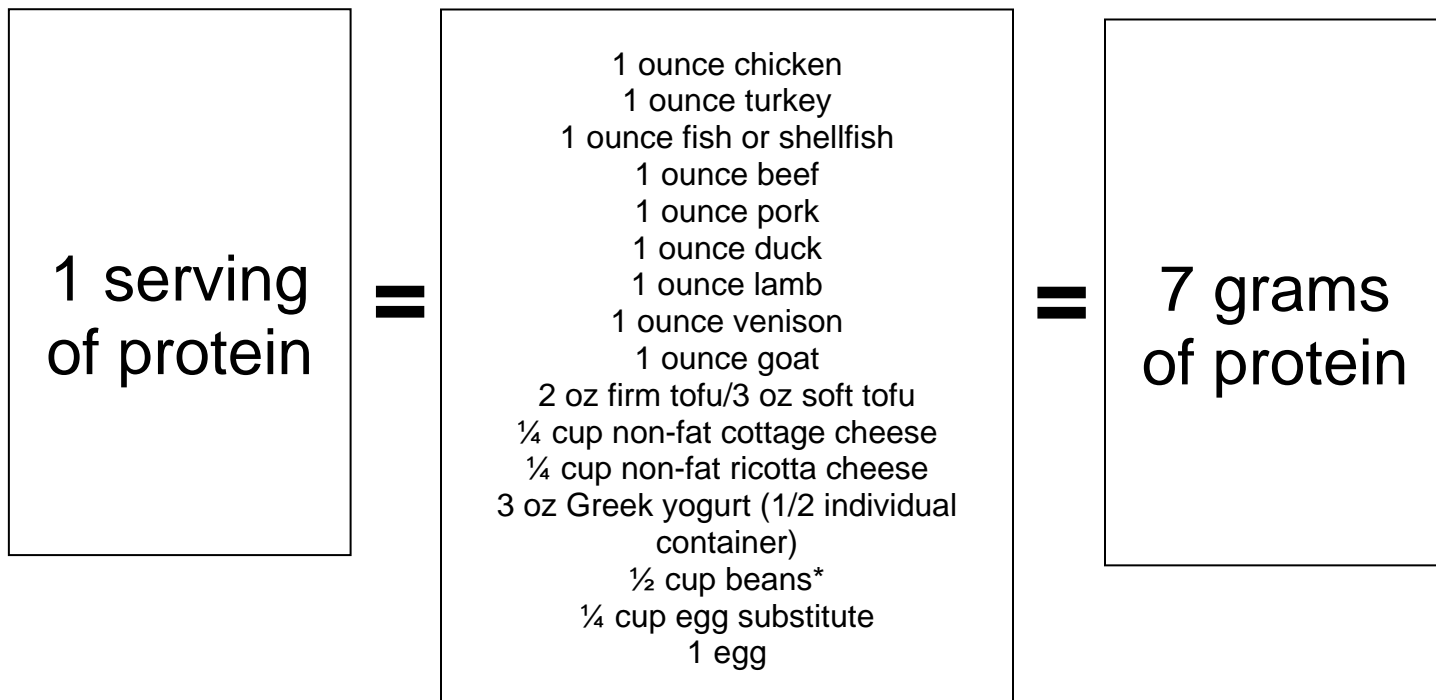


Time	Food	Liquid (oz)	Protein (g)	Vitamins
	<b>Total</b>	<b>oz</b>	<b>g</b>	

# Serving Sizes

## Protein Foods

Each protein food contains 7 grams of protein per serving. You may eat multiple servings at a time.



*\*1/2 cup beans is equal to 1 protein serving + 1 starch serving*

1 ounce or 1 serving = about 7 grams of protein  
2 ounces or 2 servings = about 14 grams of protein  
3 ounces or 3 servings = about 21 grams of protein

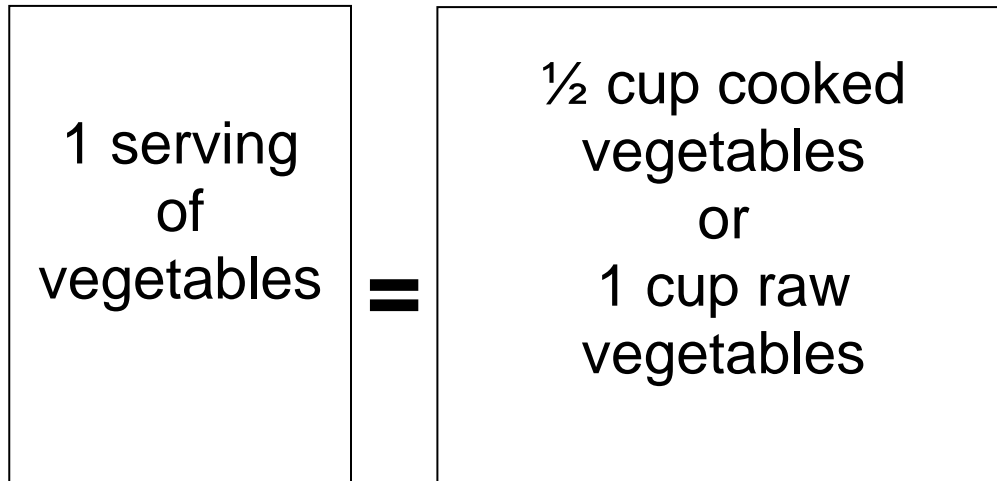
- Choose lower fat protein foods (like skinless chicken breast, 99% fat free ground turkey).
- Limit red meat (beef, lamb, pork, goat,).
- Processed meats can increase a person's risk of colorectal and stomach cancer. Processed meats include hot dogs, pepperoni, salami, chorizo, sausages, corned beef, ham, bacon, pastrami, and any other meats that have been cured, smoked, salted or treated with any chemical preservatives. The dietitian can provide you with more information about processed meats.

**Aim to eat 8 protein servings every day  
(which is about 60-70 g of protein daily)!**

## Non-Starchy Vegetables

Each vegetable serving contains 5 grams or less of carbohydrates and 2-3 grams of fiber per serving.

*Fresh and frozen vegetables are ready to eat! Rinse canned vegetables to remove some salt.*



### Examples of non-starchy vegetables:

Artichoke Asparagus Beets Broccoli Brussels Sprouts Cabbage Carrots Cauliflower Celery Chayote Cucumber Eggplant Endive	Green beans Jicama Kale Kohlrabi Lettuce Mushrooms Mustard greens Okra Onions Peppers (bell and spicy) Prickly Pear (Nopal cactus) Radishes Rutabaga	Salad Greens Sauerkraut Scallion/chive Spinach Sprouts Snap Peas Summer Squash Tomato Turnips Water Chestnuts West Indian Pumpkin (auyama) Zucchini
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**Starchy vegetables:** corn, peas, potatoes, plantains, yuca (manioc/cassava), winter squash are on the [Starches List](#) (page 29).

**Aim for at least 2 servings of non-starchy vegetables every day!**

## Fruits

Each fruit serving contains 15 grams of carbohydrates and 2 or more grams of fiber.

Use fresh, frozen or canned fruits with no sugar added.

Eat fruit in its whole form instead of blending or juicing. Whole fruit will fill you up more!

### Fresh, Frozen, & Unsweetened Canned Fruit

Apple (2 in. across).....	1 apple
Applesauce (unsweetened) .....	½ cup
Apricots (canned).....	½ cup or 4 halves
Apricots (medium, fresh).....	4 apricots
Banana (8 in. long).....	½ banana
Blackberries .....	¾ cup
Blueberries .....	¾ cup
Breadfruit .....	¼ cup
Cantaloupe .....	1 cup cubes
Cherries (canned).....	½ cup
Cherries (fresh).....	12 cherries
Chico fruit (like kiwi).....	½ chico fruit
Figs (fresh).....	2 figs
Grapefruit (medium).....	½ grapefruit
Grapefruit (segments).....	¾ cup
Grapes .....	15 grapes
Honeydew melon .....	1 cup cubes
Guava, guayaba.....	½ cup
Kiwi .....	1 kiwi
Mamey .....	2/3 cup
Nance fruit (cherry like) .....	1 cup, pitted
Mandarin oranges.....	¾ cup
Mango .....	½ mango
Nectarine (2 ½ in. across).....	1 nectarine
Orange (2 ½ in. across).....	1 orange
Papaya.....	1 cup
Passion fruit .....	1/3 cup pulp
Peach (fresh).....	1 peach or ¾ cup
Peaches (canned).....	½ cup (2 halves)
Pear (fresh).....	½ large or 1 small
Pears (canned).....	½ cup or 2 halves
Persimmon .....	2 persimmons
Pineapple (canned).....	1/3 cup
Pineapple (fresh).....	¾ cup
Plantain and green banana .....	½ a plantain or ¾ cup small green banana
Plum .....	2 plums
Pomegranate.....	½ of fruit
Raspberries .....	1 cup
Soursop .....	1/3 cup pulp
Starfruit .....	3 cups cut up
Strawberries (whole).....	1 ¼ cup
Tamarind .....	11-12 raw tamarinds
Tangerine (clementines).....	2 tangerines
Watermelon .....	1 ¼ cup cubes

Every fruit & amount  
listed on this page  
=  
1 serving of fruit

### Dried Fruit (no added sugar)

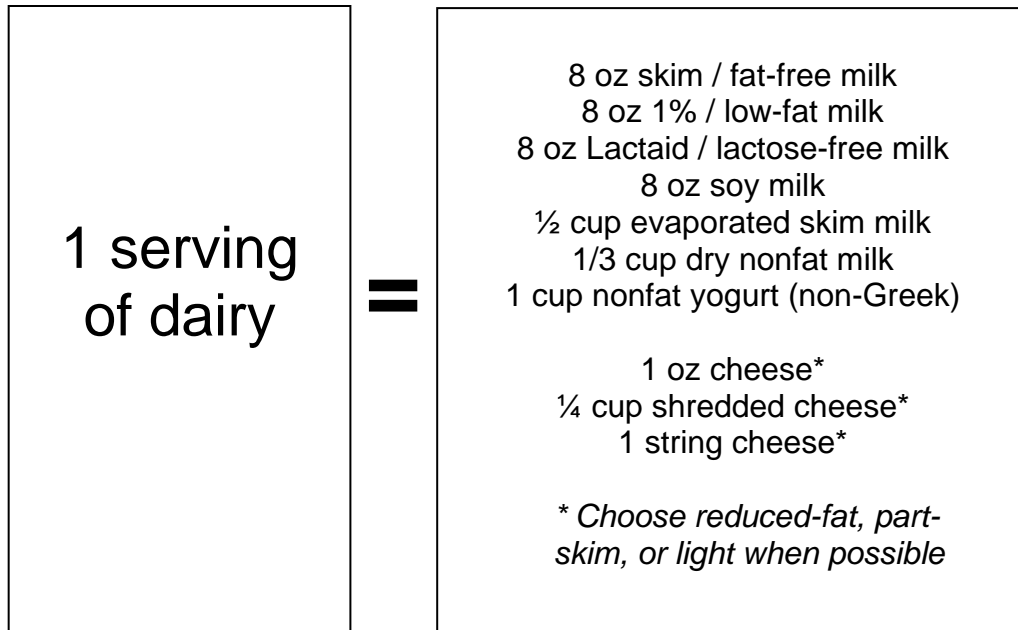
*Serving sizes for dried fruits are small because they are calorie-dense foods.*

Apples.....	4 rings
Apricots.....	7 halves
Dates.....	2 ½ medium
Figs.....	1 ½
Prunes.....	3 medium
Raisins.....	2 Tablespoons
Dried cranberries.....	2 Tablespoons

**Aim for 2 servings of  
fruit every day!**

## Dairy / Non-Dairy Alternatives

Each serving of dairy contains 6-8 grams of protein.  
Choose low sugar option! On a label look for products with less than 5g added sugar per serving.



**Aim for 1 serving of  
dairy every day!**

## Fats

Each serving of fat contains 5 grams of fat. *Conversion tip:* 1 Tablespoon = 3 teaspoons

1 serving  
of fat

=

1 teaspoon oils (olive, canola...)  
2 teaspoons of nut butter  
1 teaspoon butter  
1 teaspoon ghee  
2 tablespoons low-fat cream cheese  
1 tablespoon light tub margarine  
1 tablespoon light mayonnaise  
1 teaspoon mayonnaise  
2 tablespoons light salad dressing  
1 tablespoon oil-based dressing  
2 teaspoons creamy salad dressing  
1 tablespoon light creamy dressing  
2 tablespoons of hummus  
2 tablespoons avocado  
2 Tbsp coconut, fresh/shredded  
10 small or 5 large olives  
6 almonds  
2 whole pecans  
10 small peanuts  
2 whole walnuts  
1 tablespoon seeds

**Limit to 2-3 servings of  
fat every day!**

## Starches

Each serving contains 15 grams of carbohydrates.

Every food &  
amount listed on  
this page  
=  
1 serving of starch

Choose 100% whole grain / whole  
wheat options whenever possible!

### Cooked Beans/Peas/Legumes (also count as 1 protein)

Beans and legumes (kidney, pinto, black, lentils,  
chickpeas, black-eyed peas)..... $\frac{1}{2}$  cup  
Baked beans..... $\frac{1}{4}$  cup

### Breads

Bagel (from cafe)..... $\frac{1}{4}$  (1 oz)  
Bagel (pre-packaged, grocery store)  $\frac{1}{2}$  (1 oz)  
Bread sticks.....2 (2/3 oz)  
English muffin..... $\frac{1}{2}$   
Hamburger or hot dog bun..... $\frac{1}{2}$  (1 oz)  
Pita, 6 in. across..... $\frac{1}{2}$   
Plain roll, small.....1 (1 oz)  
Bread.....1 slice (1 oz)  
Injera bread.....1/3  
Naan (3 oz commercially prepared). 1/3  
Tortilla, 6 in. across.....1

### Cereals/Grains/Pasta

Cold cereals (unsweetened)..... $\frac{3}{4}$  cup  
Bran cereals..... $\frac{1}{3}$  cup  
Bran cereals (flaked)..... $\frac{1}{2}$  cup  
Granola.....2 Tbsp  
Shredded wheat..... $\frac{1}{2}$  cup  
Barley, cooked..... $\frac{1}{3}$  cup  
Bulgur (cooked)..... $\frac{1}{2}$  cup  
Hot cereals (unsweetened)..... $\frac{1}{2}$  cup  
Couscous..... $\frac{1}{2}$  cup  
Grits (cooked)..... $\frac{1}{2}$  cup  
Masa arepa..... $\frac{1}{4}$  cup  
Pasta (cooked)..... $\frac{1}{2}$  cup  
Rice (cooked)..... $\frac{1}{3}$  cup  
Quinoa (cooked)..... $\frac{1}{3}$  cup

### Starchy Vegetables

Corn..... $\frac{1}{2}$  cup  
Corn on the cob, 6 in. long.....1  
Green peas..... $\frac{1}{2}$  cup  
Plantain..... $\frac{1}{2}$  cup  
Potato, baked (medium).....1/2  
Potato, mashed..... $\frac{1}{2}$  cup  
Taro, boiled/mashed..... $\frac{1}{2}$  cup  
Winter squash (acorn, butternut)..... $\frac{1}{2}$  cup  
Yam/sweet potato..... $\frac{1}{3}$  cup

### Crackers and 'Snack Foods

Animal crackers.....8  
Graham crackers (2.5 in. square).....3  
Matzo..... $\frac{3}{4}$  oz  
Melba toast.....5  
Oyster crackers.....24  
Popcorn (popped, 94% fat free).....3 cups  
Pretzels..... $\frac{3}{4}$  oz  
Rye crisp (2 in. x 3 in.).....4  
Saltine crackers.....6  
Soda crackers.....6  
Wheat Thins.....8  
Triscuits.....4

Limit to 3 servings of  
starch every day!

# Possible Problems & Solutions

We do not expect problems to occur, but if they do, we want you to know how to solve them. It is helpful to keep a record of anything unusual that occurs and what you did before and after it happened to identify trends and help you talk to your care providers more specifically.

## **Dizziness, Headaches, Lightheadedness, Dark Urine (Signs of Dehydration)**

- ✓ Drink fluids with electrolytes (like Propel Zero or Powerade Zero).
- ✓ Add salt to your foods.
- ✓ Drink salty bouillon or soup broth.
- ✓ Call the Physician's Assistant phone line at 617-732-8882 if you are unable to catch up on your fluids.

## **Constipation**

### *Short-term Solutions*

- ✓ Increase your fluids – aim for 64 ounces daily.
- ✓ Try a laxative, such as Milk of Magnesia or Miralax, and take a stool softener up to 3 times daily.
- ✓ Try psyllium, a natural soluble fiber.

### *Long-term Solutions*

- ✓ Increase your fluids – aim for 64 ounces daily.
- ✓ Increase your fiber intake.
  - Eat more fruits, vegetables, legumes and whole grains if your diet stage permits.
  - If you are unable to add more fiber through your diet, try a fiber supplement, such as Benefiber or Metamucil.
  - Slow and steady is the key to adding fiber to your diet. Start with a small amount, such as one serving of fiber supplement or one extra serving of food with fiber. Stick with that amount for 1-2 weeks before increasing as needed.
- ✓ Stay physically active.
- ✓ Continue taking a stool softener as needed.

## **Diarrhea**

- ✓ Limit or avoid foods with lactose. Lactose intolerance can occur after surgery. Please see page 12 for more details.
- ✓ Eat slowly and chew thoroughly.
- ✓ Do not drink fluids with meals.
- ✓ Avoid high sugar, high fat, and spicy foods.
- ✓ Limit the amount of sugar-free products (like sugar-free candies). These products may contain sugar alcohols (artificial sweeteners that end with –ol such as malitol, sorbitol, xylitol, etc.) that can cause diarrhea.
- ✓ Limit caffeinated beverages.
- ✓ Try a probiotic supplement – ask your dietitian for suggestions.
- ✓ Try psyllium, a natural soluble fiber.



# Possible Problems & Solutions (continued)

## Nausea and/or Vomiting

- ✓ Tune into your eating behaviors. Take small bites, chew thoroughly and pause after each bite.
- ✓ Stop eating or drinking at the first sign of fullness, which may feel like pressure in your upper chest.
- ✓ Stay hydrated. Drink at least 48-64 ounces of fluids.
- ✓ Keep foods tender and moist.
- ✓ Determine whether you might have lactose intolerance (page 12).
- ✓ Avoid eating and drinking at the same time.
- ✓ If these suggestions do not work, or you vomit bright red or dark brown liquid, please call the PA line or your surgeon's office.

## Bloating/Gas/Cramping

- ✓ Limit or avoid foods with lactose. Lactose intolerance can occur after surgery. Please see page 12 for more details.
- ✓ Limit or avoid sugar alcohols (artificial sweeteners that end with -ol such as malitol, sorbitol, xylitol, etc.).
- ✓ Avoid carbonated beverages.
- ✓ If drinking through a straw causes these problems, avoid using one.

## Heartburn

- ✓ Every person has different food and beverage triggers of heartburn. Make a list of the ones that trigger heartburn for you and avoid them.
- ✓ Take your prescribed heartburn medication.
- ✓ Tune into your eating behaviors. Take small bites, chew thoroughly and pause after each bite.
- ✓ Avoid lying down for 3-4 hours after eating.

## Hair Loss

- ✓ Hair loss after bariatric surgery is called 'telogen effluvium' and generally occurs around 3-6 months. This happens because some of your hair follicles are in resting stage (telogen phase) during the time of surgery, and the stress of significant weight loss can cause that hair to stay in the resting stage.
- ✓ There's generally not much you can do about hair loss at 3-6 months post-op except minimize washing and brushing to prevent extra fallout.
- ✓ If hair loss continues after month 6, speak to your dietitian. It could be related to iron, copper, zinc, or B vitamin deficiencies or not eating enough protein.
- ✓ You can also try Nioxin shampoo.

## Dental Health

- ✓ Because you won't be eating and drinking together after surgery, you may be at a higher risk for dental carries. Also, acid reflux may damage your teeth, so consider the following:
- ✓ Swish your mouth out with water/mouth wash (don't swallow!) and spit after eating to remove food particles.
- ✓ Floss regularly.
- ✓ Consider brushing 3 times daily.
- ✓ Talk to your dentist about your bariatric surgery, especially if you have acid reflux.
- ✓ Consider adding a 3<sup>rd</sup> cleaning; instead of every 6 months, schedule a cleaning for every 4 months.

# Frequently Asked Questions

## Navigating Diet Stage 5 and Beyond

### Q: How much should I be eating in stage 5?

A: Appropriate portion sizes will look a bit different for everybody and get a bit larger over time. About a ½ cup portion is common at the beginning, leveling off at about 1-1.5 cups total volume per meal when your diet stabilizes. See page 20 for visual examples. Avoid distractions and eat slowly so you can start paying attention to your body’s cues for fullness. Stop eating at the first sign of fullness. Fullness cues may now include nausea, runny nose, or hiccups.

### Q: What will my meals look like?

A: Look at the Stage 5 meal plan to guide food choices and suggested portions. Remember, choose protein foods first, then vegetables or fruits, and starches last. Use fats as flavorings or for moisture. Stay in touch with the dietitians too!

### Q: Will my appetite return?

A: The hormone changes experienced after surgery might not last forever and it is normal for your appetite and hunger cues to gradually return over time. It is important to establish healthy meal routines and avoid skipping meals. Foods high in protein and fiber help control hunger. Avoid eating just because or from boredom, stress, and emotional triggers.

### Q: Will I be able to enjoy my favorite foods again?

A: After the initial recovery period and in the long-term we would expect you to eat a wide variety of foods and no foods are off limits completely. We will work with you to carefully plan meals and snacks to help ensure you are meeting your nutrition needs while including foods that you enjoy.

### Q: How much weight will I lose?

A: Every patient will lose a different amount of weight, at different paces. It's important to never compare your rate of weight loss with other patients because everyone is different. Most weight loss occurs in a "stair-case fashion" where patients lose a certain amount of weight followed by a stall period. Try to look for non-scale indicators of progress such as body composition changes, gains in energy levels and a reduction of medications.

## Behavioral Considerations

### Working with the Bariatric Psychologists

Your experience after surgery will most likely be very positive. There are many behavioral and lifestyle changes needed after surgery. Our team will help you make changes and manage challenges both before and after surgery. We are also happy to help provide referrals for additional behavioral support as necessary.

Common challenges after surgery...	Behavioral treatment to help...
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• body image disturbance</li><li>• “mourning” the loss of food</li><li>• compulsive behaviors (e.g. gambling, excessive shopping, promiscuous sex)</li><li>• difficulty noticing changes</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• cognitive behavioral therapy (CBT)</li><li>• communication skills</li><li>• social support</li><li>• relaxation techniques</li><li>• coping skills training</li></ul>

### Q. How can I expect to feel in the first month after surgery?

A. Patients often find that the first month after surgery can be a most challenging time. It is not unusual to experience “buyer’s remorse”, or the sense of “why did I do this to myself?”. This may be natural when dealing with post-surgical pain, impaired sleep, diet changes, and fatigue. However, mood and anxiety symptoms tend to improve quickly. Please monitor your symptoms, you may notice mood returning to normal after you have settled into your new lifestyle.

# Frequently Asked Questions (Continued)

## **Q. Will I need to change my psychotropic medications after surgery?**

A. Our team will review all your medications and suggest changes, if needed. Extended release (ER) or sustained release (SR) medications are often not absorbed as well after surgery. You may need to speak with your physician about making a change to your prescription. **Please do not make any changes to your medications unless approved by the prescribing physician (PCP or psychiatrist).**

## **Q. Will my sleep disorder improve after surgery?**

A. Many patients' sleep improves after surgery. However, while patients with sleep apnea sense they "snore less" or are sleeping better, they often still have milder symptoms of sleep apnea. Therefore, they may still require ongoing treatment. **Please continue use of CPAP, BiPAP, or AutoPAP until otherwise advised by your physician.**

## **Q. What can I expect to feel in social situations?**

A. Patients report many positive and negative changes with others after surgery. Changes could include:

- increased positive attention
- feeling more comfortable in social situations
- decreased stigma/rejection
- improvements in body image
- improvements in sexual functioning
- disruptions of relationships
- insensitivity or jealousy from others
- increased irritability
- difficulty with increased sexual attention/navigating dating situations

It is worth noting there is a higher divorce rate in patients who have had weight loss surgery. This could be associated with younger age, prior history of divorce, shorter time in marriage, and/or history of substance abuse. A key factor in break ups of relationships appears to be one which was already unhealthy. It is strongly encouraged to discuss the impact of weight loss on your relationship with your partner. We will continue to monitor your mood and social status after surgery, and may recommend other psychological support including marital therapy or communication training.

## **Q. How long should I avoid alcohol after surgery?**

A. It is recommended to avoid alcohol during the first year after surgery. This will allow for complete healing of your procedure and prevent dangerous leaks from the surgical sites. After that time, it is still important to be careful with how much you drink as your body will not metabolize alcohol in the same way.

As a result of the surgery, alcohol gets into the bloodstream at a higher rate than you have felt before, has a more immediate effect, and takes longer to clear your system. These factors lead to a situation in which one glass of wine, a beer, or a shot of liquor could lead you to be above the legal limit to drive within 15 minutes. An increase in rates of alcohol use disorder have also been noted and presents numerous risks. If you (or a loved one or friend) feel you are drinking more or more often, please contact us or your primary care doctor for help.

## **Q. How can I expect to feel years after surgery?**

A. Most patients are very happy they've had surgery and often report, "I wish I'd done it sooner." While depressive symptoms tend to improve initially after surgery, some patients do see a return of symptoms 2-5 years after surgery. This is not necessarily a new symptom, but a return or worsening of depression/mood symptoms in patients who have experienced this in the past. During your assessment your psychologist can identify risk factors and make recommendations to aid in overall wellbeing even years after surgery. Our bariatric psychologists are ready to help you! Please follow-up with your surgery team whenever you need.

**Q: How can I be successful with keeping weight off?**

**A: Stay connected and in-control!** We want to support you and your health goals. Research shows staying connected with your program and providers will help you be more successful long term. The surgery is just a tool and your lifestyle, eating, and exercise patterns will determine how successful you will be. Know that some weight regain can happen to most patients, it is most likely to happen about a year and a half after surgery. Some patients can regain more than others, possibly due to a return of problematic eating habits which can include emotionally triggered eating, grazing, meal skipping, difficulty with portion control, restrictive eating, or even “binge” eating (feeling a loss of control). Please keep in mind that these behaviors, while worrisome, can be addressed with our team!

**Tips for Staying connected:**

- Being active in support groups and/or attending individual appointments on a regular basis.
- After the first year of surgery, our time likes to see you at least every 6-12 months.
  - Schedule these appointments in advance to avoid forgetting

**Tips for staying in control:**

- Remember your victories: log them, save them, and regularly remind yourself what you have achieved!
- Keep a “motivation” folder (virtual or physical location) to store before and after pictures, or your first airplane ticket without a seatbelt extender or tickets to the amusement park ride you enjoyed with your kids after surgery.
- Be aware of eating habits and try to identify if you have started picking or grazing.
- Avoid unplanned eating moments and try to control your environment to minimize these opportunities.
- Have scheduled and structured eating times.
- Meal planning can minimize unplanned eating events.
- Check yourself: use a food log or exercise tracker occasionally can help you spot emerging trends.