

Nutrition Frequently Asked Questions

How much weight will I lose?

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 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.

How long do I need to wait before exercising?

You can start exercising the day you get home, including walking on a treadmill, riding a stationary bike, etc. The only restriction is that you may not lift anything over 10 pounds for 6 weeks after your surgery.

Does my diet after surgery need to change?

After surgery, you will follow a diet based on texture and nutrient needs. You will start on a clear liquid diet and progress slowly through protein shakes, soft-textured foods, and eventually more regular-textured foods. As time goes on, you will tolerate a balanced diet with a variety of foods. We encourage lean protein, vegetables and fruits, whole grains, low-fat dairy, and healthy fats. Patients may develop food intolerances, such as milk, certain types of meat – everybody is a little different. Prior to surgery, patients meet with a bariatric dietitian for a comprehensive instruction regarding diet and recommended behavior changes after surgery.

What is my protein requirement after surgery?

The general goal is at least 60 grams of protein per day from foods and fluids early post-operatively. The dietitian will meet with you to explain the post-operative diet.

Are all protein shakes the same?

No, there are MANY different protein products available and some are not going to be appropriate after surgery. It's important to avoid any collagen- or gelatin-based protein products. Whey or soy-based products would be appropriate. This would be identified on the ingredient list of the product. If you have any questions, please bring them up with your dietitian.

How will I drink fluids?

Food and fluid cannot be consumed at the same time; you need to wait at least 30 minutes after meals to drink fluids. You will need to be sipping fluids all day to avoid dehydration and will avoid caffeinated and carbonated beverages. Caffeine irritates the stomach lining and can interfere with mineral absorption. Carbonated beverages can cause discomfort. Avoid alcohol – it's empty calories and will irritate your stomach lining.

Will I need to take supplements?

Reduced calorie intake, poor digestion/absorption of nutrients, and changes in food tolerances may lead to protein or vitamin/mineral deficiencies. Possible side effects include hair shedding, muscle loss, osteoporosis, and anemia. Daily vitamin supplementation is required for life.

What happens if my weight loss stops?

A true plateau usually lasts for 4 weeks or longer. It's very common to notice "mini weight stalls" where your weight doesn't move for a period of 2-4 weeks. When you experience a true plateau, the best advice would be to schedule an appointment with your dietitian so we can assess your eating patterns and exercise routines and provide appropriate feedback.

How can I ensure that I avoid weight regain?

The most important thing you can do is stay connected to the program by being active in support groups and/or attending your individual appointments on a regular basis. The surgery is just a tool and your lifestyle, eating, and exercise patterns will determine how successful you will be long-term.