



# **Guidelines for Post Operative Diet**

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## General Guidelines - *Important After Bariatric Surgery*

### **First 8 weeks After Surgery**

- Avoid spicy and acidic foods such as tomato, citrus, peppers.
- Do not chew gum.
- Do not use a straw.
- Avoid rice, bread, lettuce, spinach, and protein bars.
- Avoid skin and seeds from fruit.
- Avoid alcohol for the first year after surgery.

### **Always Avoid**

- Carbonated beverages
- Caffeine
- Juice
- Honey, sugar or syrup
- Smoking

### **More Guidelines**

- Do not lift 10 pounds or more for the first 6 weeks.
- Avoid twisting and bending for the first 6 weeks.
- No swimming for the first 4 weeks.
- Walking and stationary bikes **are** acceptable for the first 6 weeks.

## Fluids, Hydration

- Goal: 56 to 64 ounces (7 to 8 cups) of fluids per day (water, protein drinks, soup, ice, popsicles, fat-free or skim milk, calorie-free beverages).
  - Sip 1 ounce over 15 minutes.
  - Wait 20-30 minutes before and after eating before you drink.
  - If you drink less than 56 ounces and are feeling the symptoms of dehydration (dizziness, nausea, dry mouth) - Please Call Your Doctor.
- Goal: 60 to 80 grams of protein per day. Please count protein drinks, milk, yogurt, meat and alternative protein.
  - Avoid vegetables, fruits, grains, cereals, bread, pasta, and rice.

## What to Expect After Bariatric Surgery

### From Surgery Date to Two Months Post-Op

1. If you're taking pain medications, you'll not be able to drive or operate machinery.
2. For the first two weeks, it's important to drink slowly. One ounce over 15 minutes. After two weeks, the amount of fluid you can drink at one time will gradually increase. This is normal and expected. Fluids should be consumed between meals.
3. For the first six weeks your caloric consumption will be between 400 and 600 calories. After six weeks, you'll range between 600 and 800 calories.
4. Start taking your vitamins (calcium citrate, and magnesium) 14 days after surgery
5. The first year is the phase of the surgery where the majority of your weight-loss will occur. The first two months (2) is when the most rapid weight loss will occur.
6. Decreased appetite makes it important to keep your nutrition regular for proper healing and energy.
7. It is normal to feel pain, tenderness on the left side of your belly. This may last for as long as four weeks. Call your doctor if you're concerned about any stomach pains.
8. The first two months can be challenging emotionally and physically. Do consider
9. Decreased or fluctuation energy levels during the first two months are normal.
10. When you exercise, bring water and protein drinks with you.
11. Keep water by your bedside during the night.
12. When you're back to work plan ahead. Bring snacks and meals to work. Take breaks. Exercise during work - go for a walk on your lunch break. Exercise with a partner.
13. The taste will likely change after weight-loss surgery. For example, foods may start to taste too sweet.

### Two Months to Six Months After Surgery

- After two months your stomach will start to be able to hold more food. Calories consumed should increase to 600 to 800 per day.
- Meals should take approximately 30 minutes to eat. Plan for 3 meals per day, with one to two snacks. Stop eating when you're full. Drink liquids between meals.
- Incorporate regular exercise into your life. Aim for 60 minutes, 4 to 5 days per week.
- Hair loss can occur during this stage.

## Six Months to One Year After

- Continue regular exercise. Increase the variety of activities to keep your muscles fit to avoid getting bored. Aim for 250 minutes of moderate-intensity exercise per week (60 minutes, 4 or 5 times per week).
- Meals should take approximately 30 minutes to eat. Plan for 3 meals per day, with one to two snacks. Stop eating when you're full. Drink liquids between meals.
- At six months, your calories consumed should intake between 800 to 1000 per day.
- Monitor both protein and calories. Making healthy food and drink choices and keep food records will help you reach your weight goals.
- Appetite and hunger usually return. Food intolerances will continue to improve. Continue to increase the variety of foods you eat and avoid sugar and high-fat foods.
- Continue to reach out for your support and group meetings.
- Don't fall back into your old habits.
- Hair loss should start to stop and reverse.
- Many patients report that they feel cold more often. This can be the result of the loss of body fat (fat acts as insulation to keep you warm) or low iron.
- It's important for you to have your labs checked. Make sure your physicians know which labs are important to check after bariatric surgery.

## After One Year

- Now your meal size should increase to 1000 to 1200 calories per day, with an average portion of 1 to 1.5 cups.
- Meals should take approximately 30 minutes to eat. Plan for 3 meals per day, with one to two snacks. Stop eating when you're full. Drink liquids between meals.
- Develop healthy eating and exercise habits to prevent weight regain. Exercising can help with promoting long-term weight loss maintenance. Aim for 250 minutes per week.
- Check your weight weekly, and monitor your progress.
- Episodes of low blood sugar may occur as you get farther out from surgery. Call your primary care doctor or the bariatric surgery clinic if you have symptoms of low blood sugar. Symptoms often improve after eating complex carbohydrates with protein at each meal and snack. Avoid eating simple sugars, such as candy and juice.
- Continue to take your vitamin and mineral supplements. Get your labs checked yearly.

# Bariatric Surgery Post-Op Diet

## Foods to be Avoided for first 8 weeks

- Do not chew gum
- Do not use a straw
- Avoid carbonated beverages (unless flat, diet, and caffeine-free)
- No juice or sweetened beverages
- No honey, sugar, syrup
- Avoid protein bars, rice, fresh bread, lettuce, nuts, seeds
- Avoid skin and seeds of fruit (because of nuts)
- Avoid spicy and acidic foods, drinks for 8 weeks, including:
  - Pineapple Juice
  - Grapefruit Juice
  - Orange Juice
  - Hot Sauce
  - Peppers
  - Tomato, Vegetables Juice
  - Tomato Sauce, Soup



## Post-Op Diet Stages

There are five regular stages of the postoperative diet for Bariatric Surgery:

- Clear Liquids Diet – Phase, Stage 1 (Post surgery, week 1)
- Protein-Based Liquids – Phase, Stage 2 (14 days post surgery, week 2 and 3)
- Pureed Foods – Phase, Stage 3 (21 days post surgery, weeks 4 and 5)
- Soft Foods – Phase, Stage 4 (35 days post surgery, weeks 6 and 7)
- Regular Foods – Phase, Stage 5 (44 days post surgery, week 8 and beyond)

### Diet Phase, Stage 1: Clear Liquids

**Duration: While in Hospital up to 1 week Post-Op, lasts Week 1 (Doctor/Nutritionist may give specific instruction for longer or shorter duration)**

In this phase, the goal is to sip 1 ounce of fluid over 15 minutes. Which means taking only small sips of liquid over 15 minutes. In the stage 1 diet the only foods, drinks allowed are:

- Water
- Ice chips
- Broth
- Sugar-free gelatin and popsicles

- Calorie-free, non-carbonated, caffeine-free or decaffeinated beverages
  - Some examples: Crystal Light, Sugar-free Kool-Aid

## Diet Phase, Stage 2: Protein-based Liquids

**Duration: Starts 7 days after surgery for 2 weeks, lasts during Week 2 and 3**

Phase Goals: 60 to 80 grams of Protein per day and 56 to 65 ounces of fluid per day  
The first week is characterized by thin liquid foods. Begin with sips and gradually increase it. It is advisable that you take at least 3 liters of liquid diet per day to avoid getting dehydrated and to prevent constipation. Liquid diet during this period includes unsweetened fruit juice, skimmed milk, and blended fruit juice. The quantity of these foods should be as prescribed by your surgeon.

### General Guidelines for Diet Phase 2:

- Consume a chewable multivitamin with minerals twice daily (12-hour difference)
- All liquids should be thinner than milkshakes
- All medications should be liquid, crushable, or chewable
- Sip 1 ounce over 15 minutes. (your tolerance will increase over time)

### Foods Allowed:

- All Foods in Phase 1
- Protein Drinks
- Fat-free or 1% milk, soy milk, Lactaid milk
- Low-carb, light yogurt
- Lentil or Split Pea Soup
- Sugar-free pudding (thinned-out)
- Reduced fat cream soups (no tomato)

### Sample Meal Plan: Phase 2

Here is a sample meal plan that you can use. It's important to achieve the field goals and protein goals per day. The sample meal plan is roughly 550 calories.

#### Breakfast

- 8oz of Protein Drink (over 2 hours)
- 8oz of water (2 hours)

#### Mid-Morning

- 8oz of water (2 hours)



- 2oz sugar-free gelatin (30min)

#### Lunch

- 8oz of water (2 hours)
- 4oz blenderized split pea soup (1 hour)

#### Mid-Afternoon

- 8oz of water (2 hours)
- 4oz of protein drink (1 hour)

#### Dinner

- 8oz of protein drink (2 hours)
- 1 sugar-free popsicle (30 min)

## Diet Phase, Stage 3: Puree (Blenderized)

**Duration: Starts on day 21 after surgery for 2 weeks, lasts during Week 4 and 5**

Phase Goals: 60 to 80 grams of Protein per day and 56 to 65 ounces of fluid per day  
During the 2nd-3rd week post-surgery, the diet should be composed of soft foods with no lumps. Examples include fats free yogurt, mashed potatoes, blended, baked bean, thick, smooth soup, etc. you can eat small quantity at a time for about 4-5 times daily.

### General Guidelines of Diet Stage 3:

- Introduce one new food at a time
- Start with 1/8 to 1/4 cup portions
- Aim for 3 to 4 servings of food per day with liquids in-between
- No liquids 20-30 minutes before or after foods
- Do not eat while distracted
- Start taking calcium with D and B12 supplements
- You may begin taking whole pills, capsules, and multivitamins.
- You may continue your chewable multivitamins if you prefer
- To consume a meal should take as much as 45 minutes. Food Allowed:
- All foods in phases 1 and 2
- Small Curd fat-free or low-fat cottage cheese
- Pureed beef, chicken, turkey, pork, fish (blend twice while dry, then add broth)
- Fat-free or low-fat refried beans
- Tofu
- Pureed lentils and peas
- Hummus

- Fat-free or low-fat ricotta cheese
- Canned tuna or chicken mashed with a fork
- Mashed potatoes
- Pureed fruit, such as no sugar added applesauce
- Cooked and mashed vegetables
- Baby food

### **Sample Meal Plan: Phase 3**

Here is a sample meal plan that you can use. It's important to achieve the fluid goals and protein goals per day. Wait for 20 to 30 minutes before or after meals before drinking liquids.

#### **Breakfast**

- 1/4 cup non-fat cottage cheese
- 8oz of caffeine-free tea

#### **Mid-Morning**

- 8oz of protein drink
- 16oz of water

#### **Lunch**

- 1oz puree chicken

#### **Mid-Afternoon**

- 8oz of protein drink
- 16oz of water

#### **Dinner**

- 1/8 cup mashed tuna
- 3 bites no sugar added applesauce
- 8oz of water

## **Diet Phase, Stage 4: Soft Foods**

**Duration: Starts on day 35 after surgery for 2 weeks, lasts during 6 and 7 weeks**

**Phase Goals: 60 to 80 grams of Protein per day and 56 to 65 ounces of fluid per day**

Foods soft diet for Bariatric Surgery include beans, cooked vegetables, fish, eggs, etc. can be considered during this stage. By 5th-week post Bariatric Surgery, you may start taking solid diets. At this juncture, your stomach should be fit to handle solid foods, and you can return to three meals per day with a little snack.

## **General Guidelines of Diet Stage 4:**

- Start with 1/4 to 1/2 cup portions
- Aim for 3 to 4 servings of food per day with protein drinks used as snacks
- To consume a meal should take as much as 45 minutes
- Eat slowly and chew food thoroughly

### **Food Allowed:**

- All foods in phases 1, 2 and 3
- Finely chopped, moist and soft foods (size of an eraser head on pencil)
- Lean ground chicken, ground turkey, ground beef, ground pork
- Fish
- Beans, lentils, bean soups
- Low-fat cheese
- Boiled, poached, and scrambled eggs
- Hot cereals
- Well-cooked vegetables
- Boil potatoes without the skin
- Canned fruit in light syrup or its juice (rinse both)
- Soft fruits without skin ( banana, peaches, pears)
- Crackers (whole grains w/ 3 grams of fiber per serving)
- Toast (whole grain w/ 3 grams of fiber per serving)

### **Sample Meal Plan: Phase 4**

Here is a sample meal plan that you can use. It's essential to achieve the fluid goals and protein goals per day. Wait for 20 to 30 minutes before or after meals before drinking liquids.

#### **Breakfast**

- 1/2 cup cream of wheat with 1 scoop of protein powder added
- 8oz of water

#### **Mid-Morning**

- 4oz protein drink

- 16oz of water

#### Lunch

- 1-2oz chicken
- 3 bites green beans

#### Mid-Afternoon

- 8oz fat-free or 1% milk
- 16oz of water or Crystal Light

#### Dinner

- 1/2 cup refried beans with 1 oz melted cheese
- 2 bites of a banana
- 8oz of water

## Diet Phase, Stage 5: Regular Diet After Surgery

**Duration: Starts on day 50 after surgery, lasts the rest of your life**

Phase Goals: 60 to 80 grams of Protein per day and 56 to 65 ounces of fluid per day

A typical meal for a bariatric surgery diet includes protein-rich foods such as lean meat, eggs, beans, low-fat dairy products, and high-fiber foods including vegetables and fruits. Whole grains are eaten in moderation – i.e., with “My Plate” whole grains would fill no more than 1/4 of the plate. Eating protein and high fiber foods help you feel fuller longer. You will be able to eat a variety of foods – but low fat, low sugar, and in smaller portions.

### General Guidelines of Diet Stage 5:

- Slowly introduce a greater variety of foods. Not one food or food group provides all of the nutrients needed for good health.
- Continue to wait 20-30 minutes before and after meals to drink.
- Aim for 3 meals and 2 snacks per day. Protein drinks may be used as a meal replacement or as a snack.
- Eat slowly and chew foods well.

#### Protein Foods

- Choose low-fat protein foods to eat at every meal
- Cook meat in low-fat sauces and gravies to keep it moist for better tolerance.
- Avoid meats that are roasted or barbecued with crisp edges.
- Avoid teriyaki and barbeque sauces as these contain sugar.

- Choose low fat or fat-free cheese and limit to 2oz per day

#### Dairy

- Goal: choose low-fat dairy foods 2-3 times per day
- Low-fat dairy foods are good sources of protein, vitamin D, and calcium
- Trying mixing protein powder with cow's milk or soy milk (lactose intolerance)
- Light yogurt or 1 oz low-fat cheese with fruit may be a good snack

#### Vegetables

- Goal: eat 3-5 servings of vegetables per day
- Add vegetables to each meal and snack
- Start with well-cooked steamed vegetables before trying raw crisp vegetables
- Chop all vegetables before you eat them. You may not try chopped lettuce.
- To get more servings of vegetables between meals consider having vegetable juice, such as v8, and vegetable soups

#### Fruit

- Goal: eat 2-3 servings of fruit per day
- Start with soft fruits without the peel for better tolerance
- Introduce crisp, fresh fruits last, such as apples
- Avoid 100% fruit juice and other sugar-sweetened juice beverages for the rest of your life

#### Grains and Cereals

- Choose whole grains, such as oatmeal, quinoa, brown rice, whole wheat pasta, and whole wheat tortillas
- You may introduce cold whole grain cereals now. Avoid sugar coated cereals
- White bread and rice may still not be well-tolerated, and calories can add up fast with these foods.

#### Fats and Oils

- avoid most added fats such as butter, margarine, mayonnaise, salad dressings, cream, lard, bacon grease, shortening, and sour cream
- Limit the following to 1-2 teaspoons per day: olive oil, canola oil, peanut oil, low-fat salad dressing, low-fat mayonnaise.

#### Sugar

- Avoid simple sugars, which are found in candy, cookies, ice cream, table sugar, doughnuts, cake, honey, syrup, pies, sherbet, jelly, and fruit juice.

**Avoid carbonated beverages. They contain refined sugar and will be counterproductive in your weight reduction goal. They also cause diuresis and may tilt you toward dehydration. Coffee should be avoided as it is acidic and may cause gastric reflux.**

Multivitamins (vitamins B12, vitamin D) and mineral supplements (zinc, iron, and calcium) may be essential in the early postoperative period of the Bariatric Surgery as you may be struggling to eat and your diet may not supply the appropriate quantity of those micronutrients. However, as your meals become more regular, you may no longer need those supplements.

Some people find certain foods challenging to eat following bariatric surgery. Such foods should be avoided. They can be reintroduced once the patient is more comfortable with them.

Always remember that post Bariatric Surgery the dietary plan varies from one surgeon to the other. Thus, it's essential that you adhere to your doctor's schedule of when to transit from the different dietary stages. If you vomit or get constipated at any time, call your doctor.

The final aim of Bariatric Surgery is to achieve weight loss and after surgery that starts and with a diet after surgery.

Thus, the diet post Bariatric Surgery is designed to achieve this optimum results while helping new patients speed up recovery.

The principles include a high protein and low carbohydrate and fat diet, avoidance of refined sugars, avoidance of alcohol, liberal fluid intake, minimal or no 'junks.'

**High protein diet will help reduce muscle breakdown and accelerates healing, while low carbohydrate will help reduce weight. Refined sugars are high in calories and deficient in nutrients and therefore affect the adequacy of the nutrients in your diet.**

As part of your preparation for surgery, our nutritionist will send out our complete dietary plan for you. It is important to have started this dietary modification (pre-op diet) well

enough before surgery. This would help reduce the operative complications, accelerates wound healing and ensure sustainability post-surgery.

Following Bariatric surgery, your stomach would have reduced by 80-90%, and you will experience early satiety following intake of little amount of meal. A gastroesophageal reflux with the risk of vomiting may follow excessive/too rapid eating. This can be avoided by eating a small meal at a time and eating slowly. Chew thoroughly and drink only at least 30 minutes before or after eating.

### **Never eat when it's time to go to bed.**

Due to some hormonal changes following Bariatric Surgery, the appetite reduces, and you may be tempted not to eat. This may also be reinforced by the false belief that avoiding meals post op will speed up the weight loss. However, not eating following Bariatric surgery may make you malnourished and possibly slow down your recovery.

Our surgeon will determine when it is safe for you to eat. Usually, the oral intake post Bariatric Surgery is commenced with clear liquid (sips of water) followed by a gradual transition to a liquid diet, and later to semi-solid and solid food. Here is the sample plan of our post-op diet.

## **Supplements and Vitamins**

After weight-loss surgery you'll have decreased absorption of certain vitamins and minerals. After bariatric surgery you'll need supplements for the rest of your life in order to prevent vitamin deficiencies.

### **3 Days After Surgery**

- **Chewable Multivitamin:** Start after being discharged from hospital (3 days after surgery). Examples: Flintstones Complete, Generic Children's Complete Chewable, Equate Children's Multivitamin Complete.
  - Should be chewable.
  - Take 2 tablets daily with meals. At least 2 hours apart.
  - Needs to contain 100% of the following:
    - Thiamin (B1)
    - Riboflavin (B2)
    - Niacin (B3)
    - Pyridoxine (B6)

- Folic Acid

- **Iron:** Take only directed by your physician. Some people, including menstruating women may need additional iron supplements. Your labs should be taken regular to check your iron levels. Iron can be dangerous if taken for a long time.

## 14 Days After Surgery

- **Vitamin B12:** Take 500 mcg (micrograms) once per day. Choose a sublingual form (dissolves under your tongue). Do not chew b12 vitamins.
- **Chewable Citrate Calcium w/ Vitamin D and Magnesium:** Take 1000 to 1500 mg (milligrams) per day.
  - Ideally take 500 mg at a time. For example, take 500 mg three times per day.
  - No not take at the same time as your multivitamin if it contains Iron.



## Exercise

1. Consistent exercise before and after surgery will help with weight loss and long-term weight maintenance.
2. Consult with your physician before you start any exercise routine.
3. Do not lift more than 10 pounds in the first six weeks after surgery.
4. No swimming for at least 4 weeks after surgery.
5. Avoid bending or twisting for a minimum of 6 weeks.
6. Walking, treadmill (with handlebars), and stationary bicycles are the recommended forms of physical activity for the first 6 weeks after surgery.
7. Have a backup plan for bad weather.
8. Schedule exercise on your calendar.
9. Wear comfortable shoes for walking. Leave your sneakers near the door to remind yourself to walk.
10. Vary your physical activity to avoid boredom.
11. Develop the habit of integrating more activity into your daily routine.
  - a. Take the stairs.
  - b. Park further away.
  - c. Walk/Bike Ride instead of driving.
  - d. Use a pedometer to keep track of your daily steps (aim for 10,000 steps per day).



# Meal Planner

	Breakfast	Lunch	Dinner
Monday			
Tuesday			
Wednesday			
Thursday			
Friday			
Saturday			
Sunday			

**Shopping list:**
