

Diet After Bariatric Surgery

PATIENT INFORMATION

The first two weeks after bariatric surgery you must have a fluid diet

After surgery your stomach will be very swollen and you won't be very hungry at all. The focus at this stage is on healing and adjusting to the surgery rather than losing weight. **You are required to follow a thin fluid diet for two weeks.** Drinking fluids after sleeve gastrectomy :

- Allows your stomach to heal
- Stops the new stomach swelling too much
- Prevents unnecessary vomiting

What can I drink?

In this phase you need to drink smooth liquids that are thin enough to pass through a straw. It is essential that you take small sips slowly, yet frequently, to remain hydrated and minimize pressure in the stomach.

No lumpy fluids, fizzy drinks and alcohol

Immediately following surgery, start drinking clear, non-fizzy fluids, such as water, tea and fruit juice. In the beginning while the swelling is at its worst and there isn't much room in your stomach, 50ml will take about 30 minutes to sip. Using a shot glass is a good reminder to drink small volumes often. As the swelling goes down, you'll find it easier to drink, to the point where you are able to drink about one cup (250ml) in 30 minutes (usually around day 10). This is really important as in the long run, we want you to take about 20-30 minutes to eat a cup of food, so practicing "one cup; half an hour" will help you form the habit of eating slowly and adjust later on.

Prior to discharge from hospital you are required to drink 1 litre of fluid

What to drink?

At this stage your nutrient requirements are met by liquids only – total fluids and protein are key. You may drink anything from the list below but remember that it's vital to drink protein-containing drinks to get enough protein and essential nutrients to maintain healthy body functions and allow your surgical wounds to heal.

Aim to drink the following each day:

1. 3 x 250ml serves of protein drinks each day from the following list:

- Optifast shake or thin soup (this is ideal)
- Milk
- A breakfast drink like Up & Go
- Drinking yoghurt (no lumps)
- A medical nutrition supplement like Sustagen Hospital Formula, Ensure or Resource Fruit Beverage
- A protein supplement like Bodiez Protein Water, Protein Revival or Musashi P30

2. Plus another 1.25 litres from the following list:

- Diluted fruit juice
- Vegetable juice
- Thin strained soups
- Water (+/- diet cordial/lemon)**
- Tea and Coffee
- Electrolytes such as Hydralyte, Gastrolyte, High 5 Zero, Nuun or Powerade Zero
- Lo Cal Vitamin Water

Water is often difficult to drink, so flavour it to help you drink more.

After two weeks of fluid diet you must eat a mushy diet for two weeks.

What can I eat?

You can enjoy any smooth, soft foods. The texture needs to be similar to “mushy” baby foods – easily “squashable” with a fork. For the first few days, make sure they are blended but after that you should be able to eat foods that aren’t blended as long as they are mushy and you chew them really well so they are puree by the time you swallow them.

The golden rule here is if you wouldn’t feed it to a baby that is just starting to eat food, then you shouldn’t be eating it!

Remember these key points:

- You’ll probably manage about ½ cup (125ml) serves as meals. If you can’t eat this much, especially to start with, don’t worry. Definitely don’t force yourself to finish – it will make you feel uncomfortable.
- Over the two weeks on purees gradually thicken the consistency of the puree (start out quite runny then thicken) rather than increasing the volume.
- Chew well!

Avoid:

- Lumps – these may cause a blockage (e.g. vegies that are cooked but raw in the middle).
- Anything that you can't squash with a fork – especially white bread, rice, dry meats, raw fruit and raw vegies as they will get stuck
- Fizzy drinks, alcohol and excess calorie-containing drinks like juice, sugary cordial or milk (unless it is a meal).
- Drinking with meals – wait 30 minutes before and after meals .
- Overeating – this will make you feel uncomfortable and put strain your wound as it is still healing.

How should I eat?

Concentrating on how you eat is REALLY important. If you eat too fast, your mouthfuls are too big, or you eat too much, you'll likely make yourself uncomfortable and potentially bring up your meal. Instead,

1. Eat slowly: Use a teaspoon, take small mouthfuls ($\frac{1}{4}$ – $\frac{1}{2}$ tsp per mouthful) and rest between.
2. Relax! Take 20 – 30 minutes to enjoy your meals
3. Instead of eating more at meals, thicken the texture of your meals, as the weeks go on.
4. Still hungry? Add a high protein, pureed mid-meal snack if you need it. (Often if you try to hold on, you'll be starving by your next meal and eat too fast/much)

Some Meal Ideas

BREAKFAST

- Cereal made soggy with milk (eg. 1 Weet-Bix)
- Porridge made on milk (make sure there are no lumps)
- A soft-poached (be careful of scrambled)
- A fruit & yoghurt/milk smoothie
- Yoghurt +/- some pureed or stewed fruit or mashed banana
- Smooth ricotta or cottage cheese with a little avocado
- A meal replacement shake such as Optifast

LUNCH & DINNER

Aim to make your meal ½ protein and ½ veg

- Pureed meat or chicken casserole/stew or mince made with vegies and gravy or other Liquid
- Thick soups (blend really well and make with meat, chicken or legumes for protein) No lumps.
- Pureed fish, smoked salmon or tinned salmon or tuna in oil (the oil is easier to eat than spring water as it's more slippery)
- Mashed beans or lentils (e.g dahl or chilli con carne) No lumps
- Silken tofu
- Mashed veggies to go with your protein (cook well) – good options are broccoli, cauliflower, sweet potato or pumpkin, add extra liquid.

A few tips for pureeing:

- Use saucy or well-cooked, soft foods. Avoid stringy and dry foods – these don't puree well.
- Use a blender or bar-mix to process the food.
- You can use a potato masher or fork for soft vegies – but make sure there are no lumps!
- Freeze in ½ cup portions and reheat for convenient, pre-prepared meals.

A few final notes...

- Multivitamins: Start taking a daily liquid multivitamin (like Supradyn or Berocca Performance) or chewable multivitamin (like NutriChew or Nipro BN Multi available online). Allow them to go flat before drinking.
- Fibre: A liquid diet provides minimal fibre, so constipation and/or diarrhoea are common. Begin a daily fibre supplement when you get home from hospital to help even out your bowel motions. Benefiber or Metamucil are both good options but Benefiber is much easier to take as it is clear and tasteless. Take your fibre separately to your multivitamin as it may stop the nutrients being properly absorbed.
- Constipation: As well as the fibre supplement, also try 50ml of prune juice 1-2 times per day, drink plenty of water and keep active with light walks
- Medications: Small tablets may be swallowed whole, but large tablets such as multivitamins or Diabex may not. Please check with your GP or pharmacist before crushing medications.