

Frequently Asked Dietary Questions:

Why have I been requested to lose weight prior to surgery? We require weight loss so that the size of your liver can decrease, increasing the chances of your surgery being done laparoscopically. Losing weight prior to surgery may decrease the risks of complications around the time of surgery, may allow a smaller incision and may speed recovery after surgery. Secondly, a commitment to try to lose the weight in order to help with the surgery shows a commitment on your part and ensures that you will be compliant with our dietary plan both before and after surgery, which is key to success.

How big will my stomach be after the surgery? About 1-2 ounces, which is approximately the size of an egg.

Will I ever be able to eat normal foods again? You will be able to eat regular food following the 5-6 week transitional period after surgery. The biggest difference will simply be the drastic change in meal size. After eating a few ounces, you will feel very full. Although you will have to avoid sugars and limit fats in your diet, you can otherwise eat a wide range of your favorite foods and even dine out.

Why is protein so important in my diet after surgery? After gastric bypass surgery, we focus on protein. Protein is essential in healing, maintaining muscle tissue and organ function.

Why is it important for me to drink fluids after surgery. It is important to maintain about 48-64 ounces to maintain appropriate body levels of fluid and to replace loss due to weight loss. Dehydration can make you feel very sick.

Are there any nutritional supplements that I will have to take after this surgery? Due to limited capacity of your stomach and the way your pouch is connected to your intestine, it is difficult to get adequate amounts of some nutrients in your diet. For those reasons, you will have to take a multivitamin with calcium every day for the rest of your life.

After the surgery, how will I take the medications I am currently on? Small pills or capsules can be taken as before. Oral tablets that are fairly large must be broken or crushed or alternative medications can be chosen. Speak to your surgeon regarding this.

Why can I not eat any foods with a lot of fat and sugar after surgery? One incident of eating these foods will answer this question for you! Sugar and fats are not tolerated well and will cause severe symptoms such as pain, nausea, heart racing, vomiting, cramps and diarrhea. This is called Dumping Syndrome. Also, they are not very nutritious and since you can only eat a limited amount, you should save room for more nutritious choices.

When can I drive? After the first visit back to the clinic, if you are no longer taking narcotics and feel comfortable to move.

When can I go back to work? As soon as you feel fit. 2-6 weeks for most desk jobs and 6-8 weeks for manual labor jobs.

When can I start exercising? Start walking immediately! You can start doing more strenuous exercising such as aerobics approximately 6 weeks following surgery. Avoid sit-ups until about 6 months following surgery. Listen to your body. You will know when you are ready.

Why am I losing so much hair? Sometimes after surgery patients will complain of hair loss. It is related to not getting enough protein or vitamins in your diet and for many, it is the body's response to rapid weight loss. You will not go bald. Your hair loss is usually not permanent and will grow back.

What should I do if I am having constipation? You may need to increase your fiber and fluid intake. Food records will help you quantify what you are currently consuming. If increasing fiber doesn't help, try Metamucil, milk of magnesia or diluted prune juice.

What do I do if I have gas and bloating or diarrhea? For the first week after surgery, it is normal to feel some cramping or diarrhea. However, later on some patients may experience these symptoms due to a sugar found in milk products called lactose. If you are intolerant to lactose, it will cause gas, bloating and diarrhea. Symptoms should resolve by switching to lactose free products.

What do I do if I am feeling nauseous? Watch your eating behavior. Perhaps you are eating too much, too fast or eating foods high in sugar. Discuss this with your doctor if it continues. It is very important to keep food records for the first few months to identify problem foods or amounts of food and fluids.

Why do people often vomit after surgery? Vomiting is not an uncommon occurrence, however it can be controlled. If you are vomiting, there are some things you should be looking for. Are you eating your food too quickly? Is the food too dry? Make sure meats are moist. If you are still having problems with meats, even if moist, leave them out of your diet and try them again in a few weeks. Drink fluids separately! Do not eat and drink at the same time. Liquids will fill you up and may cause distress, making you feel like you need to vomit.

What could cause me to feel tightness in the middle of my chest while I am eating or right after I eat? You may be overeating or eating too fast. Time yourself when you sit down to a meal. Remember it should take 10 minutes to consume 1 ounce of food. Keep food records of amounts and time you start and finish.

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