

# General Guidelines for Bariatric Surgery Patients

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## Post-Surgery Dietary Adjustments

Bariatric surgery alters your gastrointestinal tract and requires permanent changes in your eating habits to support successful weight loss. You must adhere strictly to the recommended guidelines from your surgical and nutrition teams.

## General Dietary Guidelines

Generally accepted dietary guidelines after weight-loss surgery include:

- When your doctor tells you to start eating solid food, you must chew thoroughly. Digestion begins in your mouth and may help protect your smaller pouch.
- Chew your food at least 20 to 30 times before swallowing.
- Consume fluids between your small meals. They will make you feel full before you have had enough to eat. Don't drink fluids while eating.
- Omit desserts and other items containing sugar if they are listed among the first three ingredients.
- Omit carbonated drinks, high-calorie nutritional supplements, milkshakes, fruit smoothies, high-fat foods and foods with high fiber content. Discuss specific beverages with your bariatric surgery team.
- Avoid alcohol.
- Limit snacking between meals.
- Do not chew gum.
- Do not drink through a straw.

## Support from a Registered Dietitian/Nutritionist and Psychologist

Compliance with postoperative dietary guidelines is critical. For this reason, follow up with your nutritionist and/or bariatric surgery psychologist.

Your nutrition and surgical teams will help you understand what foods and fluids to eat and drink following surgery. A bariatric surgery psychologist will assist you in following postoperative guidelines and will support both you and your family with the changes that accompany weight loss.

## Protein Sources

You will transition from a complete liquid diet to a soft or pureed diet, eating tiny amounts of food. To prevent malnutrition and remain strong and healthy, your body needs protein to build new tissue, preserve muscle tissue and repair wounds. It also helps your immune system fight infections. Aim for 60 grams of protein a day, gradually increasing to 80 to 100 grams.

Good protein choices include lean meats such as skinless chicken or turkey, trimmed round steak, lean pork chops and fish. Low-fat or fat-free cheeses, cottage cheese, skim milk, fat-free plain yogurt, whole eggs or egg whites and beans are also good choices.

## Protein Supplement List

Protein supplements after surgery will help meet minimum protein requirements. Eat protein foods first. Drink protein supplements between meals.

Some proteins may not be tolerated right away. Keep track of this and reintroduce them at another time. Please check with your bariatric surgery team for a list of approved protein drinks for preoperative and postoperative diets.

## Nutrition Counseling

Our registered dietitian at Holy Cross Hospital offers [outpatient nutrition counseling](#). Kaiser patients will work with a Kaiser-registered dietitian/nutritionist, with a Bariatric Nutrition referral from the bariatric surgeon.