

# Diarrhea

Diarrhea (loose stools) can occur after weight-loss surgery. It is most common after bilio-pancreatic diversion and biliopancreatic diversion with duodenal switch (BPD or BPD/DS), but it can occur after sleeve gastrectomy (SG) or gastric bypass (GBP), especially in patients with certain sensitivities.

Diarrhea is not associated with adjustable gastric banding (AGB). However, other factors unrelated to AGB surgery may cause diarrhea in people who have had this procedure and should be addressed with your primary care provider.

The following tips may help you prevent or manage diarrhea.

## Prevention

- Avoid:

- Milk, foods made with milk, and whey protein concentrate if you are lactose intolerant (use Lactaid milk or lactase tablets; read food labels for hidden sources of lactose such as whey, milk solids, and dry milk powder)
- Sugar and foods high in sugar
- Greasy and high-fat foods (especially if you had BPD or BPD/DS)
- Sugar alcohols, such as xylitol and sorbitol (sugar alcohols may or may not be listed on the Nutrition Facts label; check the ingredients list for ingredients ending with “ol”)
- Drinking fluids with meals
- Caffeine
- Spicy foods

- Try:

- Probiotics
  - Soluble fiber (e.g., Benefiber)
  - Consuming more fluids to prevent dehydration
  - Sugar-free sport drinks (e.g., Powerade Zero or Pedialyte) to replace electrolytes
- Certain medications, such as colchicine (which is used to treat gout), may cause diarrhea. Be sure to let your health care providers and surgery teams know which medications you are taking.

## Reasons to Seek Medical Attention

Talk to your weight-loss surgery team if dietary changes do not improve your diarrhea or if you experience any of the following:

- Diarrhea that continues for more than two days
- Diarrhea that is associated with other symptoms of a general illness, such as non-cramping abdominal pain, fever, and so on
- Diarrhea associated with blood
- Extremely watery, foul diarrhea associated with cramping within the first 90 days after surgery—this may indicate a *Clostridium difficile* (*c diff.*) bacterial infection