

Guidelines for Successful Weight Loss with Bariatric Surgery

Will I lose enough weight? Will I keep it off? These are the two biggest concerns most patients have about bariatric surgery. Your surgery is a highly-effective tool for weight loss, but there are some very important principles that you must understand in order to use your tool optimally. This guide will teach you how to give yourself the best shot at losing your excess weight and keeping it off. Remember, this tool is highly effective. It is unbelievably powerful. But it only works if you operate it properly. It is not magic. Your proper understanding and use of the tool may make it seem like magic, but it is not magic. Patients who are successful long-term follow these guidelines. Learn them and live by them. They are your “weapons” against obesity.

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Water

Hydration builds a solid foundation of success as it aids in healing and controlling hunger.

- Drink consistently throughout the day.
- Minimum of 64 ounces (8 cups/4 bottles)
- Keep beverages less than 10 calories per 8 ounces. Avoid juice, milk, soda, sweet tea, lemonade, coffee drinks, smoothies, alcohol
- Avoid caffeine for 3 months after surgery. Decaf is OK.
- Avoid alcohol for 1 year following surgery.
- Avoid carbonation long-term.
- Do not drink and eat at the same time. Stop drinking at your first bite and wait 1 hour after meal to resume drinking. May cause reflux, ability to eat more or more frequent hunger.

Exercise

Consistent purposeful movement not only will help you lose weight and keep it off, it also helps to maintain lean muscle mass during active weight loss.

- Goal is to work up to at least 30 minutes 5 times per week of aerobic activity such as walking and 15 minutes 3 times per week of a strength training activity.
- Texas Physical Therapy Specialists can help you put together a safe & effective plan to optimize your metabolic benefit.

Protein

Protein provides high-quality nutrition that promotes satisfaction and fullness while assisting in healing and maintaining muscle mass. AVOID carbohydrates. They can be addictive and cause weight regain.

- Work up to a goal of 60 grams per day for women and 80 gram per day for men. Choose protein first at each of your meals.
- Protein sources include lean meats (such as fish or tuna, skinless chicken or turkey, lean beef, pork loin), eggs, dairy (such as Greek yogurt, cottage cheese, low fat cheese), beans, or tofu.
- 50-70% of meals should be lean protein, 30-50% non-starchy vegetables (anything other than corn, peas, potatoes)
- Less than 15% (less than 1/3 cup) of your meal should be from healthy carbohydrates such as beans, starchy vegetable, dairy, or whole fruit. Avoid sweets and processed, refined carbohydrates as they will interfere with your weight loss...juice, soda, sweet tea, candy, cookies, breads, tortillas, rice, pasta, crackers, chips, oatmeal.
- Take your time to eat. Be mindful of taking small bites and chew food well. Meal times should take at least 15 minutes but no longer than 30 minutes.

🕒 No Snacking or Grazing

Bariatric surgery is a tool designed to restrict how much you can eat per meal. You are supposed to feel satisfied with a smaller portion of food at each meal. But if you have many small intakes of calories per day, whether you call it a meal, or a snack, or whatever, then you will defeat your tool. Again, the tool can only limit how much you get in per meal. If you take calories of any type in between the 3 meals a day that we recommend for you, then you won't lose as much weight as you could have lost, and you will likely regain weight.

- Eat 2 to 3 times per day. No more. No less. The rest of the time you should be fasting.
- We call taking calories of any type in-between meals SNACKING. This is the saboteur of your tool. It doesn't matter if the calories are liquid or solid, good for you or bad for you, don't snack in between meals.
- FASTING periods between meals leads to the greatest amount of fat burning...space meals at least 3-4 hours apart and avoid eating 2-3 hours before bedtime.
- It's ok to be hungry and looking forward to your next meal. Water intake between meals is recommended. Water has no calories and it may help you to avoid snacking.
- If you eat for reasons other than hunger (such as social, stress, boredom), work on finding other ways of coping with these habits rather than eating. Work with the Bariatric Counseling Center to implement new habits.
- It only takes an extra 100 calories per day to be equivalent to 10 pounds in a year.

📖 Supplements

Take your vitamin and mineral supplements every day for the rest of your life no matter how great you are feeling. This helps prevent nutritional deficiencies that may be caused by limited food intake and poor absorption of nutrients with the change in anatomy.

- Use **bariatric-specific vitamins**. They are created to deliver the quantity, type and form of nutrients that will be best absorbed after bariatric surgery. Standard over the counter (OTC) vitamin brands are formulated to meet the nutritional needs of the general population.
- Particular nutrients that you will need include a high potency, bariatric multivitamin that includes extra vitamin B12, vitamin D and possibly iron, as well as calcium in the form of calcium citrate or calcium lactate. Not all bariatric vitamins are created equally, make sure they meet the recommend micronutrient requirements.

👉 Support

Having a good support system helps to ensure accountability and can help improve long-term weight control and health management.

- Regular visits with your healthcare team (surgeon, doctor, nurse practitioner/ physician assistant, dietitian). If you start experience more than 10 pounds of weight regain, please call the office to be evaluated and get back on track.
- Attend support groups. Schedule on Patient Support tab of the website
- Receive newsletters
- Follow us on Facebook, Pinterest, and Twitter
- Utilize our website, www.sagebariatric.com. Under the Patient Support tab is the Patient Education section. Find Bariatric Surgery handbook, Nutrition Guide, educational videos, recipes, meal plans, more.
- Connect with us via the app HT CARE via code 6563. Track your progress, hydration, activity and intakes.