

# Stage 3: Solid Foods

- Stage 3 begins **week 6** (about 40 days) after your surgery once you are comfortably tolerating Stage 2 foods and ready to progress your diet. Your surgeon recommends you follow it for the **rest of your life** to achieve long-term weight loss and maintaining good nutrition.
- Remember to focus on protein first, working up to a goal of 60-80 grams of protein daily. Eat no more than 3 times per day! **FAST** in between meals.
- Remember that foods should be particularly well-chewed and eaten slowly (pausing 2 minutes between bites). As you progress and are tolerating a variety of proteins, this time may be shortened to a minute between bites.
- Meals should take you **20 to 30 minutes** to eat. This will help you learn to identify your satisfaction cues when eating more solid and textured proteins. Always stop eating or drinking when you feel **satisfied – not full**.
- For the first months after surgery, don't worry about eating a "balanced meal" that consists of several different foods. Gradually work your way up from soft to more solid meats such as white meat chicken/turkey, beef, and pork, as these meats may be tough, dry, stringy, and/or fibrous and you may only tolerate small amounts of them.
- Add non-starchy vegetables, small amounts of fruits (less than 1/3 cup per day), and healthy fats when you feel comfortable. However, you should be eating 2 to 3 bites of the protein food per bite of other foods.
- Continue to drink plenty of fluids as recommended. Remember **not to drink while eating and wait 1 hour after eating to resume drinking**.

## Protein

Protein should be the biggest part of your diet -- it provides a longer sense of fullness, is highly nutritious, and helps control blood sugar levels. Include protein at all meals. Choose high quality, leaner choices that are not breaded or fried.

Solid Proteins (Primary Choices)	Softer Proteins (Secondary Choices)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <b>Beef/Game (lean)</b>—USDA Select or Choice grades trimmed of fat, such as tenderloin; roast (rib, chuck, rump); steak (T-Bone, cubed, flank, porterhouse, sirloin, round); at least 90% lean ground</li> <li>▪ <b>Deli/processed meats</b>—lean, 96% fat-free deli meats, e.g., turkey, roast beef, ham, chicken; low-fat turkey/beef hot dogs or sausage</li> <li>▪ <b>Lamb/Veal (lean)</b>—Roast, chop, or leg</li> <li>▪ <b>Pork</b>—Lean pork, such as fresh ham; Canadian bacon; tenderloin, center loin chop</li> <li>▪ <b>Poultry</b>—Skinless chicken or turkey</li> <li>▪ <b>Shellfish</b>—Clams, crabs, lobster, scallops, shrimp</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <b>Beans</b>—Garbanzo, pinto, kidney, white, split, black, black-eyed</li> <li>▪ <b>Dairy—Milk</b>: non-fat or 1% cow, Mootopia, unsweetened soy/coconut/almond milk (≤8 ounces per day in shakes or cooking) <b>Cheese</b> (≤3 g. fat/ounce): Sliced cheese (2% milk); string cheese; hard and shredded cheese; non-fat/low-fat cottage cheese <b>Yogurt</b>: light, low-fat Greek 100 (&lt;10 g. sugar per serving)</li> <li>▪ <b>Eggs</b>—Whole eggs, egg whites, egg substitutes</li> <li>▪ <b>Fish</b>—Cod, flounder, haddock, halibut, tilapia, trout, tuna, herring, salmon, catfish, oysters,</li> </ul>

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## Non-starchy Vegetables

Non-starchy vegetables are an excellent source of vitamins, minerals, and dietary fiber. Begin adding in a few bites when you are tolerating your proteins well. Watch the use of high fat or high calorie condiments such as salad dressing or butter.

Artichoke	Artichoke hearts	Asparagus
Beans (green, wax, Italian)	Bean sprouts	Beets
Broccoli	Brussels sprouts	Cabbage
Carrots	Cauliflower	Celery
Cucumber	Eggplant	Green onions/scallions
Greens (collard, kale, turnip)	Lettuce/Salad	Mushrooms
Okra	Onions	Peppers
Radishes	Sauerkraut	Spinach
Sugar snap/snow peas	Summer squash	Tomato
Turnips	Water chestnuts	Zucchini

## Fruits

Fruits contain natural sugar/carbohydrate. They should be eaten last or only as a condiment to your meal no more than once a day. Use the following guidelines when choosing fruits.

In limited amounts	Seldom	Rarely/Never
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Fresh fruit:</b> choose any kind, preferably with the skin to increase fiber content.</li> <li><b>Frozen fruit:</b> choose unsweetened fruit of any kind.</li> </ul> <p><i>Limit bananas and tropical fruits</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Canned fruit:</b> choose canned in natural juice or extra light syrup, and unsweetened applesauce to decrease added sugars.</li> </ul> <p><i>*Tip: to remove added sugars, rinse drain and rinse before eating.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Dried fruits:</b> (e.g., raisins, banana chips) high-calorie foods that usually have added sugars.</li> <li><b>Fruit juice:</b> high-calorie liquids that will not cause fullness.</li> </ul>

## Healthy Fats

Monounsaturated and polyunsaturated fats are considered healthy fats. Fats play an essential role in the body. However, saturated and *trans*-fatty acids which are found in processed and fried foods should be avoided because they are not good for the heart. Aim for **2 servings per day** of healthy fats, as these are high-calorie foods and too much may negatively impact your weight.

Monounsaturated Fats	Polyunsaturated Fats
Avocado .....1/8 medium or 2 tbsp.... (1 oz.)	Flaxseed, ground ..... 1 ½ Tbsp
Oil (canola, olive, peanut) ..... 1 tsp.	Margarine, (stick, tub, squeeze)..... 1 tsp
Olives, black.....8 large	Margarine, low-fat (30-50% vegetable oil) ..... 1 Tbsp
Olives, green, stuffed..... 10 large	Mayonnaise, regular..... 1tsp
Nuts: almonds, cashews, mixed..... 6 nuts	Mayonnaise, reduced-fat..... 1 Tbsp
Pistachios..... 14 kernels	Oil (corn, safflower, soybean) ..... 1 tsp
Peanuts..... 10 nuts	Pumpkin or sunflower seeds..... 1 Tbsp
Pecans ..... 4 halves	Salad dressing & Miracle Whip, regular..... 1 Tbsp
Peanut butter (smooth or crunchy) ..... 2tsp	Salad dressing & Miracle Whip, reduced-fat..... 2 Tbsp
Sesameseeds ..... 1 Tbsp	Walnuts.....4halves