

Diet Guidelines for Gastric Bypass and Vertical-banded Gastroplasty

Dr. Buchwald

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The purpose of your surgery is to reduce the amount of food you can eat. After surgery, your diet will consist of small, high-protein meals. It is important for you to eat slowly and chew well.

You will be eating less food and fewer calories. For this reason, you will need to take vitamin and mineral supplements daily.

Guidelines for eating

- **Eat three meals per day.** Avoid snacking. Snacking or eating throughout the day may keep you from losing weight. It may even cause weight gain because you are eating too many calories.
- **Eat small amounts.** At first, your stomach pouch can hold only about ½ cup of food. If you try to eat more than this, you may get sick. Your pouch will slowly stretch over time. Once you have reached your weight-loss goal, you may eat up to 1 cup of food per meal. To keep the weight off, you will need to eat small amounts of food for the rest of your life.
- **Stop eating as soon as you feel full.**

- **Eat slowly.** Each meal should last 20 to 30 minutes. Eating too fast can cause you to eat too much before you feel full. It can also cause nausea, vomiting (throwing up) and pain or pressure in the shoulder or upper chest. So, sit down to eat your meals. Try setting your spoon or fork down between each bite, then wait one minute before taking the next bite.
- **Chew all foods into a paste.** The opening that leads from your stomach to your bowel (intestine) is very small—smaller than a dime. Foods that are not chewed well may block this opening. This can cause discomfort. You may feel sick to your stomach, or you may vomit. To prevent this, cut your food into small pieces. Then, chew your food well. It may take more time to chew beef, raw fruits and raw vegetables.
- **Eat at least 50 to 60 grams of protein per day.** Since you are eating less food, you will need to work harder to get enough protein. Try to include a good source of protein with each meal (such as eggs, lean meats, and low-fat or fat-free milk products).
- **Avoid sugar and fat.** Eat a well balanced diet. Do not fill your small stomach with “junk” foods that lack vitamins and other important nutrients.

Guidelines for liquids

- **Do not drink liquids with meals.** Stop drinking 30 minutes before your meals. Then wait 30 minutes after eating to drink liquids again. This will:
 - Prevent the pouch from over-filling
 - Keep food from “flushing” out of the pouch too quickly
 - Keep you feeling full longer
- **Sip all liquids slowly.** Drinking too quickly may cause nausea or vomiting.
- **Drink plenty of calorie-free liquids between meals.** Plain water is best. Drink at least 6 to 8 cups per day.
- **Avoid high-calorie liquids.** These add extra calories without making you feel full. For example, do not drink:
 - Regular soda pop
 - Coffee drinks (mocha, latte, cappuccino or other specialty drinks)
 - Kool-Aid
 - Smoothies
 - Alcohol
 - Anything with sugar
 - More than ½ cup fruit juice per day
- **Avoid carbonated (fizzy) liquids.** These can cause gas and bloating.
- **Limit caffeine.** Caffeine may make you hungry and may irritate your stomach pouch.

Other important guidelines

- **Watch for signs of dumping syndrome.** Dumping syndrome occurs when food moves out of the stomach too quickly, irritating your bowels (intestines). It can cause nausea (feeling sick to your stomach), diarrhea (loose stools), weakness, a fast pulse and cold sweats. These symptoms will go away, but they are not pleasant. To prevent them:
 - Do not drink liquids for 30 minutes before or after meals.
 - Do not eat sweets, such as soda pop, ice cream or candy.
 - Dumping syndrome does not happen to people who have had vertical-banded surgery.
- **Get regular exercise.** Since exercise uses energy and burns calories, it is very important for weight loss. Your size may make it hard for you to exercise as much as you should. But get started, even if it is just a little at first. The more weight you lose, the easier it should get.

Your diet

There are four stages to your diet plan. You will start with stage 1 and progress to stage 4. If you have problems—like throwing up or feeling sick to your stomach—you may need to go back to an earlier stage. For example, if you are on solid foods, step back to a pureed diet. If you are having problems with the pureed diet, go back to liquids. Then, slowly move to the next stage in your diet.

Stage 1: Clear liquids

Drink only clear liquids for your first few meals after surgery.

Goal:

- Slowly sip 6 to 8 cups of liquid throughout day. (Drinking too quickly can cause nausea, vomiting and pain or pressure.)

Tips:

- When you first come home, drink 2 ounces of liquid every 30 minutes. Try to increase this over the next 48 hours until you reach 6 to 8 cups of liquid per day.
- Freeze liquids in plastic bottles to carry with you.
- Do not use a straw. Straws bring air into the stomach pouch, causing gas, bloating and pain or pressure in the shoulder or upper chest.

Suggested liquids:

- Water
- Iced tea
- Sugar-free Popsicles
- Frozen fruit pops
- Clear broth
- Propel sports drink
- Crystal Light
- Cranberry juice or 100% apple or grape juice (add extra water to dilute; limit to ½ cup per day)
- Decaf coffee or tea with no sugar or honey (artificial sweeteners are okay)
- Sugar-free Jell-O

If liquids make you sick, please call the triage nurse at 612-626-4117.

Stage 2: Pureed foods

You will leave the hospital on pureed foods. You will continue with this diet for about 2 to 3 weeks.

Goals:

- Add more food choices. Foods are blended (pureed) to reduce the risk of nausea and vomiting.
- Keep drinking enough liquids. Remember to stop liquids 30 minutes before your meals. Wait 30 minutes after eating to start liquids again.
- Start taking your vitamin and mineral supplements.

Tips:

- Add new foods slowly. Try one new food at a time.
- At first, you may only be able to handle 1 to 2 tablespoons at a time. You may want to use a small saucer or a baby spoon. Slowly increase your food until you are eating no more than 4 ounces (½ cup) of food at each meal.
- Eat the protein part of your meal first.
- If you cannot handle food early in the morning, try Carnation Instant Breakfast.

Suggested proteins:

- Skim or 1% milk (no more than 1 to 2 cups per day)
- Carnation Instant Breakfast (no sugar added or “low carb”)
- Low-calorie yogurt (no chunks of fruit)
- Strained cream soups or blended chunky soup
- Low-fat cottage cheese or ricotta cheese (mash with a fork)
- Scrambled egg or Egg Beaters (mash with a fork)
- Mashed tofu
- Pureed lean beef, lean pork, chicken, turkey or fish (or use baby food meats)
- Mashed beans (such as black beans, pinto beans or fat-free refried beans)

Suggested grains and starches:

- Hot cereals (Cream of Wheat, Cream of Rice, Malt-O-Meal, oatmeal, grits)
- Mashed potatoes, sweet potatoes or winter squash

Suggested fruits and vegetables:

- Plain applesauce (no added sugar)
- Mashed bananas
- Pureed peaches, pears, apricots or other fruit
- Pureed carrots, green beans, beets or other vegetables

Sample Menu for Pureed Diet

Breakfast

¼ cup scrambled eggs (mash with a fork)

¼ cup oatmeal

Liquids between meals

30 minutes after breakfast: ½ cup Carnation
Instant Breakfast

30 minutes later: ½ cup water or calorie-free drink

30 minutes later: ½ cup water or calorie-free drink

30 minutes later: ½ cup water or calorie-free drink

Lunch

¼ cup mashed low-fat cottage cheese

¼ cup pureed peaches

Sample Menu for Pureed Diet

Liquids between meals

30 minutes after lunch: ½ cup Carnation Instant Breakfast

30 minutes later: ½ cup water or calorie-free drink

30 minutes later: ½ cup water or calorie-free drink

30 minutes later: ½ cup water or calorie-free drink

Dinner

¼ cup pureed chicken or baby food meat

⅛ cup pureed green beans

⅛ cup applesauce

Liquids between meals

30 minutes after dinner: ½ cup skim or 1% milk

30 minutes later: ½ cup water or calorie-free drink

30 minutes later: ½ cup water or calorie-free drink

30 minutes later: ½ cup water or calorie-free drink

Stage 3: Semi-soft foods

If your body can handle pureed foods, you will progress to semi-soft foods. You may continue eating semi-soft foods from 2 weeks to several months after surgery.

Goals:

- During this stage, you will begin to eat more solid foods, including soft (or ground) protein foods.
- Stop eating when you feel full.
- Eat a wide range of low-fat, low-calorie starches, fruits and vegetables.
- Keep drinking at least 6 to 8 cups of liquid per day.

Tips:

- Add new foods slowly. You may have problems with some foods more than others. Take small bites and chew all food well.
- Always eat the protein part of your meal first.
- Prepare meats using low-fat cooking methods (baking, broiling or grilling).
- Use herbs and spices to season vegetables.

Suggested proteins:

- Tuna fish or salmon
- White fish
- Shrimp, lobster or crab
- Chopped lean meats
- Lean ground beef or turkey
- Deli-sliced turkey breast, chicken, ham, roast beef
- Egg, chicken or tuna salad (use low-fat or fat-free mayo or salad dressing)
- Low-fat cheese (such as part-skim mozzarella)
- Hard-boiled or poached eggs
- Tofu
- Mashed or well-cooked beans (such as black or pinto)

Suggested grains and starches:

- Mashed or baked potatoes
- Cereals soaked in milk (like Cornflakes) or hot cereals
- Well-cooked pasta
- Low-fat crackers
- Toast (if your body can handle crackers)

Suggested fruits and vegetables:

- Canned peaches or pears (packed in juice, not syrup)
- Thawed frozen berries (plain, no syrup)
- Bananas
- Plain applesauce (no added sugar)
- Mandarin oranges
- Soft melon
- Soft, well-cooked vegetables (carrots, green beans, squash, beets, broccoli)

Stage 4: Regular diet

During this phase, you will be able to eat a regular diet. This will include foods with more texture and crunch, such as raw fruits and vegetables. This does not mean that you should go back to your old eating patterns.

Goals:

- Eat three well-balanced, nutrient-dense meals each day. Be sure to get enough protein.
- Keep drinking at least 6 to 8 cups liquid per day. Most of your liquid should be water or calorie-free drinks.
- Avoid foods that are high in sugar and fat.
- Stop eating as soon as you feel full.
- Keep taking your vitamin and mineral supplements.

Sample Menu for Semi-Soft Diet

Breakfast

Poached egg

¼ piece toast

Liquids between meals

30 minutes after breakfast: ½ cup Carnation
Instant Breakfast

30 minutes later: ½ cup water or calorie-free drink

30 minutes later: ½ cup water or calorie-free drink

30 minutes later: ½ cup water or calorie-free drink

Lunch

¼ cup chopped chicken

¼ cup cooked carrots

Sample Menu for Semi-Soft Diet

Liquids between meals

30 minutes after lunch: ½ cup Carnation Instant Breakfast

30 minutes later: ½ cup water or calorie-free drink

30 minutes later: ½ cup water or calorie-free drink

30 minutes later: ½ cup water or calorie-free drink

Dinner

¼ cup tuna salad

3 to 4 low-fat crackers

2 fresh strawberries

Liquids between meals

30 minutes after dinner: ½ cup skim or 1% milk

30 minutes later: ½ cup water or calorie-free drink

30 minutes later: ½ cup water or calorie-free drink

30 minutes later: ½ cup water or calorie-free drink

Sample Menu for Regular Diet

Breakfast

½ cup (or one small piece) fruit, no sugar

⅓ to ½ cup yogurt or egg

Liquids between meals

1 cup skim or 1% milk

At least 1 cup water or calorie-free drink

Lunch

2 ounces meat, fish, chicken, turkey

¼ cup vegetable

¼ cup (or one small piece) fruit, no sugar

Sample Menu for Regular Diet

Liquids between meals

1 cup skim or 1% milk

At least 1 cup water or calorie-free drink

Dinner

2 ounces meat, fish, chicken, turkey

¼ cup vegetable

¼ cup (or one small piece) fruit, no sugar

Liquids between meals

At least 1 cup water or calorie-free drink

Remember

Do

- Follow your diet as your surgeon and dietitian have told you.
- Chew foods until they are finely ground.
- Stop eating at the first sign of fullness.
- Take 20 to 30 minutes to eat your meals.
- Drink 6 to 8 cups of liquids each day.
- Expect to vomit (throw up) from time to time as you move from liquids to solid foods.
- Crush large pills and tablets for the first few weeks after surgery.
- Try one new food at a time.
- Eat three meals per day. Try to eat at the same time each day.

Don't

- Don't gulp liquids.
- Don't swallow large pieces of food.
- Don't eat tough meats, stringy raw vegetables or pulpy fruits until your body can handle other solid foods.
- Don't eat beyond the first feeling of fullness.
- Don't snack between meals.
- Don't eat fast.
- Don't forget that your stomach is smaller now.
- Don't have high-calorie drinks such as regular soda pop or Kool-Aid.

If you vomit, stop drinking and eating until you feel better. Then, drink liquids before you try to eat solid foods.

If you keep vomiting, call the triage nurse as soon as possible at 612-626-4117. You can also go to the hospital emergency room.

How to treat or prevent problems

Nausea and vomiting (feeling sick to your stomach or throwing up)

- Eat and drink more slowly.
- Take in less food and liquid.
- Chew your food more.
- If you feel sick after eating a new food, wait a few days before trying it again. You may have to go back to liquids or pureed foods for a while.

Dumping syndrome

Symptoms may include feeling very bloated, feeling sick to your stomach, weakness, warmth, fast pulse, cold sweats and diarrhea. This does not happen to people who have vertical-banded surgery.

- Avoid foods and drinks that contain sugar.
- Do not drink fluids with meals.
- Wait at least 30 minutes after eating before having something to drink.

Pain in shoulder or upper chest

This may occur when you eat too much, or when you eat something that is hard to digest. If it happens while eating, stop and wait. Try to eat again after the pain is gone.

Dehydration (loss of water in the body)

This can happen if:

- You don't drink enough fluids.
- You keep throwing up, having diarrhea or feeling sick to your stomach.

To prevent this, drink at least 6 cups of liquid each day.

Lactose intolerance

Symptoms may occur after you eat or drink milk products. They include diarrhea, bloating and stomach pain.

- Take lactase enzyme tablets.
- Try lactose-free drinks, like soymilk, Lactaid or Dairy Ease milk.

Constipation (hard stools)

This may happen in the first month after surgery. It should go away as you begin to eat solid foods.

- Eat foods that are higher in fiber (fruits, vegetables, whole grains).
- Drink 6 to 8 cups of liquids each day.
- Think about using a fiber supplement (ask your doctor or dietitian).

Diarrhea (loose stools)

- Limit:
 - high-fiber foods
 - greasy foods
 - milk and milk products
 - very hot or cold foods
- Eat smaller meals.
- Sip fluids between meals.

Heartburn

- Avoid soda pop and other carbonated (fizzy) drinks.
- Do not use a straw.

Bloating

- Drink only 2 ounces of liquid at one time.
- Sip slowly.

Blockage of the stomach outlet

If a large piece of food blocks the stomach outlet, you might throw up, feel pain or feel sick to your stomach. If symptoms persist, call your doctor.

- Chew your foods well.
- Do not move to the next stage of your diet until your doctor, nurse or dietitian tells you to.

Stretching of the stomach pouch or outlet

- Eat small portions of food.
- Follow your diet plan. Slowly move from liquids to soft foods to solids.

Vitamin and mineral supplements

You will need to take extra vitamins and minerals for the rest of your life. The items listed here can be bought at your local drugstore.

If you have any problem finding these vitamins and minerals, or if your body cannot handle them, please call the triage nurse at 612-626-4117.

Multi-vitamin with minerals

Choose one:

- Children's chewable (take the adult dose listed on the label)
- Adult's chewable (take one per day)

After one month, you may take a non-chewable pill. Cut large pills into two or three smaller pieces.

Vitamin B12

You do not need to take this if you had vertical-banded surgery. If you had a gastric bypass, **choose one:**

- 500 micrograms by mouth each day
- 1000 micrograms shot (injection) once a month

Calcium with vitamin D

Take 1,200 mg calcium with vitamin D per day. To help your body absorb the calcium:

- Take no more than 500 to 600 mg of calcium at one time. Your body can only absorb that much at once.
- Do not take calcium and a multi-vitamin with minerals at the same time. See schedule below.
- If you had a gastric bypass: Choose calcium citrate. Your body will absorb this better than other forms of calcium.

Sample Schedule for Vitamins and Minerals

Morning: Multi-vitamin with minerals, B12

Noon: Calcium with vitamin D

Evening: Calcium with vitamin D

Phone numbers

Surgery clinic 612-626-6666
To make or cancel appointments

Triage nurse 612-626-4117
For non-emergency questions

Dietitians
_____ 612-273-4860
_____ 612-273-4991

Emergency room 612-273-2700
TTY for hearing impaired 612-273-2702

Surgeons 612-625-8446
Often in the operating room during the day

Hospital operator 612-273-3000
800-688-5252
8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., Monday through Friday.

On evenings, weekends and holidays, call the hospital operator and ask for the resident who is on call for Dr. Buchwald. You can also call Unit 7B at 612-273-3072.