



Mercy 

Bariatric Surgery

Mercy Hospital St. Louis

.....
Getting Started

► **Congratulations**

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CONGRATULATIONS

Congratulations on taking the first step to changing your life. Our Mercy care team is excited to help you regain your health from start to finish.

Bariatric surgery helps you lose excess weight and reduces your risk of potentially life-threatening, weight-related health problems, including heart disease, stroke, high blood pressure, fatty liver disease and diabetes.

You probably have some questions about the surgery. This patient information pamphlet will begin your journey to understanding the role of weight loss surgery. Most importantly, you'll learn what to expect before and after your surgery.

Here at Mercy, we work as a team. From the first person you speak to on the phone to our surgeons and medical doctors that provide care along the way. We understand this is a life-changing decision, and every one of us wants to see you succeed.

I want to personally assure you that we strive to make this a positive, life-changing experience. I know that weight loss can feel like a long and sometimes frustrating process. But our team is ready with help and support, walking every step of the way right beside you. It's our mission to provide compassionate care and excellent service to all of our patients. We look forward to answering your questions and welcome you to our program.

Sincerely,

[Katelin Mirkin, MD](#)

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CONTACT INFORMATION

The path to a successful surgery involves many steps, and Mercy is here to support you along the way.

[Location Address](#)

Mercy Clinic Bariatric and General Surgery

701 S. New Ballas Rd. | Ste. 300 | St. Louis
(p) 314.251.5890 | (f) 314.251.5891

[Questions & Concerns](#)

Pre-Surgery

Bariatric RN Navigator
314.251.5890 (ext. 4)

Two Weeks Post-Surgery

Bariatric RN Coordinator
314.251.5890 (ext. 3)

Following Initial Post-Op Appointment

Bariatric RN Navigator
314.251.5890 (ext. 4)

After Business Hours & Weekends

Bariatric Exchange (Surgeon On-Call)
314.364.5315

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ELIGIBILITY

Who's eligible for surgery?

Typically, patients who opt to have surgery have tried to lose weight on their own without success. Bariatric surgery might be **recommended for people** who have:

- A BMI of 35 or greater
- A BMI of 30-35 with an obesity-related condition, such as type 2 diabetes mellitus, high blood pressure, coronary artery disease, sleep apnea, orthopedic conditions or cancer

Guidelines changed in 2022. Some insurances still follow the old guidelines of a BMI greater than 40 OR a BMI of 35-40 with an obesity-related condition. We'll work closely with you and your insurance company to determine if you qualify.

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CONSIDERATIONS

The decision to have bariatric surgery should be discussed in-depth with your doctor.

In these discussions, it's important to **consider the following**:

Lifestyle Changes

Bariatric surgery is a tool for weight loss, not a one-time magic cure. Patients must commit to making long-term lifestyle changes, including changes to diet and exercise.

Risks & Complications

Patients and providers should discuss not only the benefits of bariatric surgery, but also the risks. Patients should be aware that problems after surgery may require more operations and care management.

Shared Understanding

Bariatric surgery saves lives. It isn't a cosmetic procedure.

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COMMITMENTS

By committing to a healthy lifestyle, you can enjoy long-term success.

Here are some of the permanent **lifestyle changes** following bariatric surgery:

No Smoking or Vaping

No smoking or vaping of any kind. The use of other tobacco-related products, such as chewing tobacco, should also be avoided.

Routine Lab Work

You must take bariatric vitamin supplements for life and have your lab work routinely monitored by a health care professional.

Follow-Up Care

Maintain regular follow-up care with a bariatric surgeon.

Avoid NSAIDS

Stop taking NSAIDs immediately after your surgery. NSAIDs predispose bariatric patients to gastric ulcers, which can be a severe and sometimes life-threatening condition for patients. Avoiding NSAIDs is especially important for people treating orthopedic conditions, such as arthritis. Stop using them permanently after surgery. Switch to Tylenol products instead.

Healthy Lifestyle

Commit to a healthy lifestyle. Bariatric surgery is a tool for weight loss and requires you to diet and exercise regularly.

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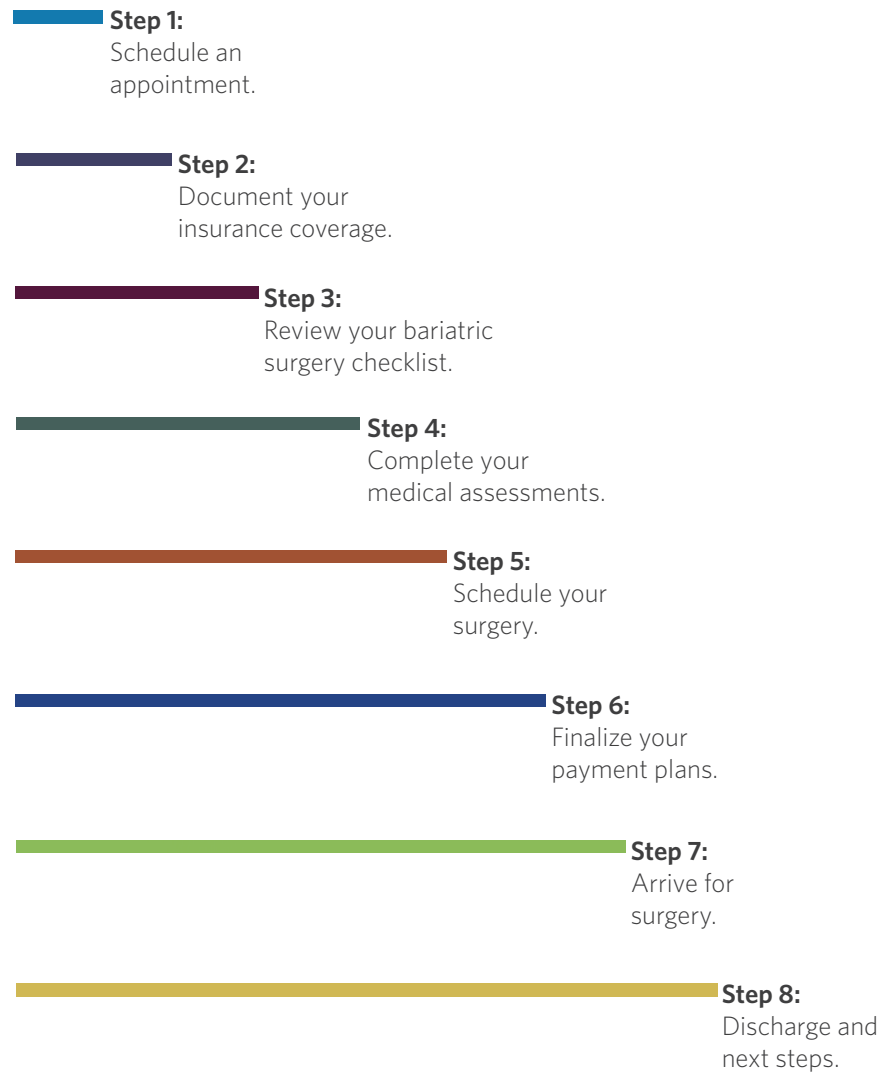
Preoperative Diet

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SURGERY TIMELINE

Knowing what to expect at each step makes your journey smoother and brings you closer to your new life after weight loss.



1

Call Mercy

We're ready to
help you get started

Schedule an appointment.

Mercy Hospital St. Louis' bariatric team include surgeons, nurse navigators, coordinators and other professionals who are ready to provide the care and support you need before, during and after surgery.

[Contact Information](#)

Mercy Clinic Bariatric and General Surgery

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2

Document your insurance coverage.

If you're having weight loss surgery, planning for the costs of your procedure is an important first step.

Call your insurance provider to confirm that the following procedures are covered at Mercy Hospital St. Louis by your plan:

Gastric Bypass
(CPT Code 43644)

Sleeve Gastrectomy
(CPT Code 43775)

Most insurance companies require the following:

Weight History

Medical insurance-specific documentation of weight history, usually for several years.

Diet Program Records

Any commercial diet program records, such as Weight Watchers or Jenny Craig.

Medication History

Documentation of any prescribed weight loss medications and/or medically supervised diets.

Exercise Program Records

Any exercise program records, such as YMCA/YWCA or gym membership.

You should gather these records right away, so we can refer to them when we contact your insurance company. Simply listing these items on your initial patient worksheet questionnaire won't be enough. Insurance companies require official documentation.

Research Coverage

Gather documentation and call your insurance provider

► Important Note

For weight history outside Mercy, you'll need to contact the doctor who weighed you and/or prescribed weight loss drugs for a copy of that documentation.

Copies of office notes detailing your weight loss attempts are needed. You might need to contact commercial diet program offices and/or exercise facilities for records if you don't have them.

3

Review your bariatric surgery checklist.

As you prepare for weight loss surgery, you'll undergo a health history review.

You'll meet with your surgeon to go over your medical and weight loss history. They'll discuss weight loss options with you and answer any questions you might have.

Our bariatric nurse navigator will give you a bariatric checklist to complete before scheduling surgery. This checklist includes diagnostic tests (such as x-rays and/or an upper endoscopy) and consultations (such as psychiatric evaluation or nutrition counseling) that you'll be required to complete before moving forward with surgery.

Bariatric Surgery Checklist

A checklist to reference as you prepare for surgery

4

Complete your medical assessments.

All patients must have a nutritional and psychological evaluation done prior to their surgery. Your surgeon will determine if any additional evaluations are needed.

You'll need to follow up with your primary care physician to be evaluated and receive preoperative clearance for surgery. Once all testing and evaluation is complete, please mail or fax the completed patient diary and copies of all outside testing results, evaluations and other documentation to our program office.

Pre-Surgery Assessments

Evaluation is an important step in determining if surgery is right for you

5

Schedule the Procedure

It's time to arrange your preop visit and surgery

Schedule your surgery.

Once your preoperative checklist is complete and you've submitted all necessary paperwork, we'll contact you to arrange a preoperative clinic visit date.

You'll set a date for your surgery during this clinic visit. You'll also meet with your surgeon once more to review your testing and discuss surgery. Your bariatric nurse navigator will help you prepare.

6

Referrals & Recommendations

We'll help you navigate the insurance referral process

Finalize your payment plans.

We'll submit a letter of recommendation and your medical records to your insurance carrier requesting approval for the surgical weight loss procedure. Your insurance company will let us know if they need any additional information to approve or deny your request.

Having your weight records and weight treatment history is crucial. Failure to include this information may delay the decision to approve or deny coverage.

Some insurance companies will decide within a few weeks, while others may take several weeks or months. We'll contact you when we've heard back from your insurance company. You can always contact your insurance company to check on the status of your insurance approval.

If your insurance company denies your request, we'll discuss how to appeal and go over self-pay options with you. If you have questions, you're welcome to speak with our insurance specialist: 314-251-5890 (ext. 5).

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Surgery Day

Prepare for the procedure
and your overnight stay

Arrive for surgery.

You'll arrive the morning of your surgery and enter Mercy Hospital St. Louis through the entrance labeled Surgery Center. The closest car park is in the Muckerman Garage.

You might not know your actual arrival time until a day or two before surgery. This is normal. Bariatric patients stay one night in the hospital on average. This ensures your pain is managed appropriately, you can tolerate liquids and your labs and vitals are stable.

Gastric bypass patients will have an upper GI x-ray the morning after their surgery.

The Road Ahead

Arriving home and
post-care appointments

Discharge and next steps.

The day after surgery, your doctor will see if you're ready to be discharged and answer any questions you may have. Most patients go home the day after their surgery.

It's important to remember that surgery by itself doesn't guarantee long-term success. Our nurse coordinator will review discharge instructions with you and answer all your questions before going home. We'll give you a phone number to call for anything once you get home.

It's very important to attend all your post-surgical visits. We'll schedule standard follow-up visits with your surgeon or physician assistant:

- 2 weeks after surgery
- 2 months after surgery
- 6 months after surgery
- 1 year after surgery
- Annually (after 1 year)

In addition, you'll see a dietitian:

- 2 weeks after surgery
- 3 months after surgery
- 6 months after surgery
- 1 year after surgery

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► **Figure A**

Sleeve Gastrectomy



► **Figure B**

Gastric Bypass



PROCEDURES

Weight loss surgery is a tool that allows you to feel satisfied while eating less and choosing a healthy lifestyle, but it's important to know the surgical approaches to treating morbid obesity.

Sleeve Gastrectomy

The sleeve gastrectomy is a procedure in which the stomach is divided and roughly 80% is removed. The patient is left a long, slender tube (or sleeve), which restricts the amount of food that can be consumed.

Ghrelin, the hunger hormone, is largely produced in the fundus (top part) of your stomach. During this procedure, the fundus is removed, leading to decreased levels of Ghrelin.

Lower-BMI patients may choose this procedure since it's less complex than a gastric bypass and has less risk of vitamin and nutritional deficiencies.

The average amount of weight loss within the first 18 months following surgery is **60% of excess body weight**. In extremely obese patients, this can be a first step to helping them lose weight, with a gastric bypass performed later.

(See Figure A)

Gastric Bypass

The gastric bypass procedure combines both restriction and malabsorption to assist with weight loss. First, the stomach is divided to create a small pouch, approximately the size of a golf ball.

The intestines are then rerouted and connected to the pouch, allowing food to bypass most of your stomach and part of the intestine. This limits your nutrient and calorie absorption.

One year after surgery, the expected weight loss of someone who undergoes the procedure is **70% of excess body weight**.

This procedure decreases pressure in the stomach, making it a good option for anyone with bad reflux. It's also a good procedure for patients who have diabetes.

(See Figure B)

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PREOPERATIVE DIET

A preoperative diet establishes healthy eating habits, allowing for an easier transition after your operation.

The liver sits on top of the stomach, and as you gain weight, your liver enlarges. A preoperative diet is designed to shrink the liver, giving your surgeon greater visibility and more space to operate during your procedure. The more weight you lose before your surgery, the safer the procedure will be.

Items Allowed

A preoperative diet starts two weeks before surgery. Below are the **acceptable items** to add to your shopping list.

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Water	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Strained Cream Soups
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Protein Shakes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Sugar-Free Popsicles/Pudding
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Sugar-Free Drinks	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Skim or 1% Milk
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Clear Broths/ Bouillon	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Unsweetened Soy/Almond Milk
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Sugar-Free Jell-O	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Light Yogurt

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Items to Avoid

Below are the **items to avoid** directly after surgery.



Solid Foods



Smoothies/Blended Fruits



Sugary Drinks



Whole/2% Milk



**Milkshakes/
Ice Cream**



**Caffeinated/
Carbonated Drinks**

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▶ **Important Note**

You may come across other diet guidelines online through friends, family or social media.

These guidelines **might not align** with our bariatric program recommendations.

If you're in doubt, please contact our office before trying something that we haven't recommended.

EATING TIPS

As part of your surgery preparation and preoperative diet education, review these helpful eating tips.

Establish a Routine

Eat three meals per day with one or two planned snacks, if needed. No grazing.

Know Your Hunger Cues

Stop eating or drinking when you start to feel satisfied.

Go Slow

Eat slowly. It should take about 30 minutes to finish each meal.

Watch Beverage Intake

Don't drink 30 minutes before a meal, during a meal and 30 minutes after a meal. If you're having trouble getting food down, don't try to force it with liquids. Instead, get up and walk around for a bit.

Start With Protein

Protein should always be eaten first.

Take Small Bites

Take small bites, even if the food is pureed or soft, such as cottage cheese. Bites should be less than the size of a dime. Even if you chew your food well, it can be too much volume going down at once.

Prep Your Food

Cut up your food before eating so you don't accidentally take a bite that's too big.

Avoid Distractions

No distractions while eating, such as watching TV or scrolling on your phone.

No Liquid Calories

No liquid calories, such as soda or juice, except in protein shakes.

Be Patient

Don't try to advance to the next phase too quickly. Diet advancement should be slow. Your surgeon plans each phase with your health and safety in mind.

Stay Calm

Food intolerance varies with each person at different times. What wasn't tolerated three months after surgery may be fine six to nine months after. Try only one new food per day. Make a note of the foods you tolerate well, along with those that you don't. Avoid foods that aren't tolerated for one to three months before trying them again.

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POSTOPERATIVE DIET

Following bariatric surgery, it's important to understand and follow your diet stages.

As a rule of thumb, each **diet stage** lasts two weeks. Even if a food is the right consistency, it might not mean the food is right for you. You should still be making healthy choices throughout each diet phase and focus on eating proteins first. Just because mashed potatoes and grits are soft, doesn't mean they're a healthy, high-protein choice.

<p>Full Liquids</p> <p>WEEKS 1-2</p>	<p>Mechanical Soft ("Fork Tender")</p> <p>WEEKS 5-6</p>
<p>Pureed Food</p> <p>WEEKS 3-4</p>	<p>Regular Bariatric Foods</p> <p>WEEK 7-BEYOND</p>

When it comes to **calorie limitations**, each patient is different. The numbers below should be used as a guide for your maximum number of calories after surgery.

<p>500-800 Calories Per Day</p> <p>MONTHS 1-3</p>	<p>700-900 Calories Per Day</p> <p>MONTHS 3-6</p>
<p>800-1,000 Calories Per Day</p> <p>MONTHS 6-12</p>	<p>1,200-1,500 Calories Per Day</p> <p>MONTH 12-BEYOND</p>

The pages to follow will serve as a quick resource you can reference to help you in your postoperative recovery.

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▶ **Postoperative Diet**

WEEKS 1-2 Full Liquids

- Daily Protein Intake:** 60-80 grams
- Daily Water Intake:** 48-64 ounces of liquids
- Daily Caloric Intake:** 500-800 calories
- Diet Stage:** Full liquids (no soft or solid food)

Your stomach is much smaller than before your surgery and is swollen while it heals. Drinking fluids and consuming protein should be your priorities during this phase. To meet the minimum fluid goal, take two to four sips every 15 to 20 minutes. No soft or solid foods. Chewing food until it becomes “liquid” consistency doesn’t count. Stop drinking around meal times, and don’t slurp, guzzle or chug liquids. Take your multivitamin, calcium, vitamin D and iron supplements after your two-week postoperative visit.

Approved diet items include:

- | | |
|------------------------------------|---|
| Water | Strained cream soups (low fat and sodium) |
| Protein shakes | Sugar-free popsicles and pudding |
| Sugar-free drinks | Unsweetened soy milk |
| Clear broths/bouillon (low sodium) | High-protein almond milk |
| Skim or 1% milk | Light yogurt (plain) |
| Sugar-free Jell-O | |

Items to avoid include:

- | | |
|--------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| Solid foods | Whole milk/2% milk |
| Smoothies/blended fruits | Milkshakes/ice cream |
| Sugary drinks | Caffeinated drinks/carbonated drinks |

WEEKS 3-4 Pureed Food

- Daily Protein Intake:** 60-80 grams
- Daily Water Intake:** 48-64 ounces of liquids
- Daily Caloric Intake:** 500-800 calories
- Diet Stage:** Pureed food (no solid food)

No solid foods. Chewing food until it becomes “pureed” doesn’t count. Fluids should be zero calorie liquids, such as Crystal Light or water. Remember to stop drinking around meal times, and don’t slurp, guzzle or chug liquids. Eat protein before you eat veggies and fruit. You might have to consume protein drinks to get adequate protein.

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▶ Puree Tips

Cut food into small pieces.

Place the food in the blender or food processor and add enough liquid to cover the blades completely.

Blend until the consistency is like applesauce. Strain out any lumps, seeds or whole pieces of food.

Use herbs and spices to flavor food, avoiding spicy, high-sodium flavorings.

Use ice cube trays to freeze pureed foods.

(Continued)

Approved diet items include:

- | | |
|--------------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| Scrambled eggs/egg beaters (pureed) | Pureed meats (blended) |
| Low-fat cottage cheese (blended) | Cream of wheat (low fat milk) |
| Mashed beans (blended) | Unsweetened soy milk |
| Pureed vegetables (no peels or skin) | High-protein almond milk |

Items to avoid include:

- | | |
|--------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| Solid foods that aren't pureed | Tomato-based foods (tomato soup/V8) |
| Mashed potatoes | Carbonated drinks |
| Beef or pork | Ice cream |
| Fried foods | Slurpees |
| Starches (oatmeal/potatoes) | Grits |
| Citrus fruits/juices | Caffeine |

WEEKS 5-6

Mechanical Soft Food

Daily Protein Intake: 60-80 grams

Daily Water Intake: 48-64 ounces of liquids

Daily Caloric Intake: 500-800 calories

Diet Stage: Mechanical soft food ("fork tender")

Fluids should be zero calorie liquids, such as Crystal Light or water. Remember to stop drinking around meal times, and don't slurp, guzzle or chug liquids. Eat protein before you eat veggies and fruit. You might have to consume protein drinks to get adequate protein.

Approved diet items include:

- | | |
|---------------------------------------|---------------------------|
| Eggs/egg beaters | Reduced-fat string cheese |
| Cottage cheese (small or medium curd) | Soft-cooked vegetables |
| Fish (baked, not fried) | Beans |
| Tofu | Low-fat canned chicken |
| Ground lean meat | |

Items to avoid include:

- | | |
|----------------------------|----------------------------|
| Whole milk | Citrus fruits/juices |
| Solid/crunchy foods | Fried foods |
| Rice | Starches |
| Popcorn | Raw vegetables |
| High-fat meats, like steak | Fatty meats, like hot dogs |
| Potatoes/bread | Pasta |

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▶ **Postoperative Diet**

▶ **Timing Note**

*First three months post-surgery

**First six months post-surgery

WEEK 7-BEYOND

Regular Bariatric Foods

Daily Protein Intake: 60-80 grams

Daily Water Intake: 48-64 ounces of liquids

Daily Caloric Intake: 700-1,000 calories

Diet Stage: Regular bariatric foods

Fluids should be zero calorie liquids, such as Crystal Light or water. Remember to stop drinking around meal times, and don't slurp, guzzle or chug liquids. Eat protein before you eat veggies and fruit. Make sure you're taking small bites and chewing meat well.

Approved diet items include:

All foods in previous phases

All liquids in previous phases

Pork

Beef

Items to avoid include:

Tomatoes/tomato-based sauces*

Citrus fruits*

Raw vegetables*

Nuts/seeds*

Dried fruits*

Dried coconut*

Popcorn**

Gum**

Tough meats, like steak*

Pork chops*

Granola*

Caffeine*

Stringy vegetables*

Spicy foods*

Food with a husk/shell (corn/peas)*

Resources

► Protein Shakes & Powders

- Diet Tips & Tricks
- Kitchen Appliances
- Bariatric Vitamins
- Exercise
- Possible Side Effects
- Bariatric Support Group
- Additional Tools

PROTEIN SHAKES & POWDERS

Here's a list of common protein brands to help you maintain your protein intake after surgery.

Protein Shakes

NAME	CALORIES	PROTEIN	PURCHASING
EAS AdvantEDGE High Protein	150	30	Walmart, Walgreens, CVS
Ensure MAX	150	30	Walmart, Target, Most Grocery Stores
Equate High Performance Protein	160	30	Walmart
Fairlife Core Power High Protein	170	26	Most Grocery Stores
Muscle Milk	100	20	Most Grocery Stores
Pure Protein Complete Protein	140	30	Walmart, Target, Costco, Sam's Club
Premier Protein	160	30	Costco, Sam's Club
Quest Protein	160	30	Health Food Stores, Some Grocery Stores
Slim Fast Advanced	180	20	Walmart, Walgreens, CVS
UNJURY	110	20	Online

Resources

► Protein Shakes & Powders

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Protein Powders

NAME	CALORIES	PROTEIN	PURCHASING
Premier Protein	150	30	Walmart, Target, Most Grocery Stores
Equate	170	30	Walmart
Body Fortress Super Advanced	140	30	Amazon, GNC, Walmart
ABOUTTIME Whey Protein Isolate	110	25	Amazon, Online
ISO Natural	110	27	GNC, Amazon
IsoPure	105	25	Walmart, Target, GNC
Pure Protein	130	23	Walmart, Target, Amazon
Optimum Gold Standard Whey	120	24	Walmart, Target, Amazon
Quest Nutrition	110	22	Health Food Stores, Online
UNJURY	110	21	Online
Market Pantry Whey Protein	160	25	Target
Genisoy Soy Protein	110	25	Walmart, Vitamin Shoppe
UNJURY Planted Pea Protein	130	20	Online

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Protein Shakes & Powders

▶ **Diet Tips & Tricks**

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DIET TIPS & TRICKS

Going out to eat after bariatric surgery can be a stressful experience. Not only are you away from home, where you can control the type and amount of food you eat, but the way you eat your meals has changed.

It can be difficult eating in public with friends and family members who might not be aware of your lifestyle changes. Here are some **tips for eating out** after bariatric surgery.

Plan Ahead

Browse menus online, if possible, to come up with a plan before arriving at the restaurant.

Know Your Diet

Be on the lookout for approved and non-approved items on menus.

Upgrade the Apps

Consider making an appetizer or side dish your main meal.

Remember the Rule of 30s

Chew 30 times, take 30 minutes to eat a meal and don't drink for 30 minutes after eating.

Speak Up

Advocate for yourself. If you have any questions about certain ingredients or preparation, don't be afraid to ask a waiter or staff.

Just Say No

No bread, desserts, soda or alcohol.

Be Wary of Salads

Salads may seem like a good choice when dining out, but restaurants often add calorie-dense dressings and toppings that may make it healthier than a main entrée.

Dressing on the Side

Order condiments and dressings on the side.

Ask for Half

Not all restaurants may accommodate your ideal serving size. Ask if you can get a half order or lunch portion in these situations. If they're unable to accommodate, ask for a to-go box to come with your meal and portion out your food before you start eating.

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▶ **Diet Tips & Tricks**

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Holidays and social gatherings can also be a challenge.

Remember, healthy eating habits shouldn't stop during the **holidays** or **special events**. Here are a few tips to help you through these situations.

Portion Control

Control your portions. It's okay to indulge in your favorite holiday treats but be mindful of portion sizes. Enjoy yourself while keeping everything in moderation.

Eat Beforehand

Don't go to gatherings hungry. Stick to your normal meal schedule to avoid overeating.

Bring a Dish

Bring a meal to share. This ensures there will be at least one dish that you know you can have.

Safety Spots

To avoid grazing, don't stand or sit near the buffet or food table.

Avoid Temptation

Don't drink alcohol.

Simple Swaps

Consider swapping out ingredients for healthier, lower-calorie options. For example, skim milk instead of whole milk, Greek yogurt instead of sour cream.

Be Kind to Yourself

You're still learning to navigate life after bariatric surgery. Everyone makes mistakes or overindulges sometimes. Just because it happens once doesn't mean your surgery didn't work or you've failed. Learn from your mistakes and refocus on making better decisions going forward.

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KITCHEN APPLIANCES

A fully stocked kitchen makes a world of difference in navigating culinary life after surgery.

Here are a few helpful **kitchen items** to have on hand.

Blender or Food Processor

A blender is necessary for the “pureed” phase of your postoperative diet. It’s also beneficial for mixing protein powder, home-made salad dressings and more. Amazon has several affordable options.

Water Bottle

Reusable water bottles with ounce measurements are helpful to make sure you’re drinking enough liquids. Munchkin® Miracle® 360 Spill Proof Sippy Cup is very helpful for bypass patients.

Food Scale

A food scale is important for measuring protein portions that don’t come with a pre-portioned food label, such as chicken breast.

Crockpot

A crockpot will help you prepare moist proteins, such as chicken or pork.

Small Plates

Eating meals off of small salad plates (approx. 6” to 7” in diameter) rather than full-size dinner plates will help control portion sizes, making you feel like you’ve eaten a full meal. Both Amazon and Walmart have six packs of reusable, dishwasher-safe options.

Tupperware

Tupperware will help you with preparing and portioning food, plus saving your leftovers.

Measuring Cups & Spoons

Measuring cups and spoons will save you from guessing serving sizes.

Air Fryer

An air fryer is a great way to prepare meat, fish or vegetables without frying them in oil. However, they can be expensive. Shop for deals during holiday sales.

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- Protein Shakes & Powders
- Diet Tips & Tricks
- Kitchen Appliances
- ▶ **Bariatric Vitamins**
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- Possible Side Effects
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BARIATRIC VITAMINS

All bariatrics patients should take vitamin supplements after surgery. The amount of food your body needs has changed, so getting enough nutrients from food alone may be difficult.

Patients will be given a sample packet and a list of **chewable bariatric vitamins** at their preoperative appointment. Please try these prior to your surgery to see which one you prefer. You'll start taking one of these vitamin brands two weeks after your surgery, so it's important to know which one you prefer ahead of time. The majority of insurance companies don't cover bariatric vitamins. Please plan ahead for this out-of-pocket expense after surgery.

Here's what you'll need:

Multivitamin with Iron (Chewable)	Calcium Citrate with D3 (Chewable)
B12 (Optional)	Zinc (Optional)

All vitamins must be chewable for the first three months after surgery. Gummy vitamins are never allowed, as your body doesn't absorb them after surgery.

Start taking your daily vitamins after your first postoperative appointment. Vitamin levels will be checked prior to your office visits starting at your two-month follow-up visit. It'll be important to maintain a consistent vitamin schedule.

Here's what we'd suggest:

- | | |
|--|--|
| 7 a.m. Calcium Citrate with D3 (500 mg) | 7 a.m. Multivitamin with Iron |
| 9 a.m. Multivitamin with Iron | 9 a.m. Calcium Citrate with D3 (600 mg) |
| 2 p.m. Calcium Citrate with D3 (500 mg) | 7 p.m. Multivitamin with Iron |
| 7 p.m. Multivitamin with Iron | 9 p.m. Calcium Citrate with D3 (600 mg) |
| 9 p.m. Calcium Citrate with D3 (500 mg) | |

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Resources

Protein Shakes & Powders

Diet Tips & Tricks

Kitchen Appliances

Bariatric Vitamins

▶ Exercise

Possible Side Effects

Bariatric Support Group

Additional Tools

▶ Daily Step Count

You'll be up and walking the day of surgery. You should continue to walk every day, with the goal of reaching **10,000 steps per day**.

Avoid lifting more than 10 pounds at a time until four weeks after surgery.

EXERCISE

It's easy to overlook the importance of exercise when bariatric surgery focuses on dietary changes. In reality, diet and exercise work together to help you achieve long-term success.

Exercise has many benefits. It increases life expectancy, helps you burn calories and reduces fat, lowers blood pressure, improves mood, helps control hunger, increases energy and can even improve chronic conditions (heart disease, diabetes and more).

Your goal should be to do **150 minutes of exercise** per week and reach 10,000 steps at least 4-5 days per week. Download HASfit®, a free app for your phone that has workout videos for all activity levels.

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SIDE EFFECTS

As you begin your weight loss journey, you may encounter side effects along the way.

Feel free to reference this resource if you have questions about a particular **symptom** post-surgery.

SYMPTOM	POSSIBLE CAUSES	POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS
Chest Pain After Eating/Drinking	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Eating too fast Overeating Carbonation/caffeine Cardiac/pulmonary embolism 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Chew food 25-30 times Take tiny bites Know your fullness cues Contact your doctor if it persists
Gas	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Eating too fast Carbonation Uncooked veggies/salads Raw beans 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Slow down your meals Avoid carbonation Take anti-gas meds
Vitamin or Mineral Deficiency	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Failing to take recommended dosages of vitamins Non-compliance with lab draws Malabsorption 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Separate dosage times Follow up for lab work Adhere to vitamin schedule
Taste/Smell Changes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Change in internal anatomy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Avoid triggers such as extreme odors and temperatures Don't skip meals Stay hydrated
Hair Loss	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Stress of surgery Hormone changes Rapid weight loss 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Take biotin Get more protein Stay hydrated Give it time
Lactose Intolerance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Change in internal anatomy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Avoid dairy Reintroduce dairy slowly Try LACTAID®
Dumping Syndrome	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> High sugar/fat intake 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Avoid sugar Avoid fried foods Avoid foods high in fat Stay hydrated

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▶ **Note on Bowel Habits**

Remember you'll be eating less after surgery, so having a bowel movement every two to three days isn't uncommon. Don't strain or force it.

If you haven't had a bowel movement in four days or more, please call our **Bariatric RN Coordinator** at **314-251-5890 (ext. 3)**.

(Continued)

Diarrhea	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Liquid phase of diet • Low-fiber intake • Lactose intolerance • Food allergy • High sugar/fat intake • Foodborne illness 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduce new foods slowly • Research lactose intolerance • Test for food allergies • Avoid foods high in sugar • Avoid foods high in fat/fried • Take Benefiber supplements • Contact your doctor if it persists
Nausea	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Anesthesia reaction • Food intolerances • Dehydration • Sensory changes • Vitamin/mineral deficiency • Complications from surgery 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stay hydrated • Test for food allergies • Avoid extreme temperatures • Don't skip meals • Take vitamins • Contact your doctor if it persists
Vomiting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Overeating • Eating too fast • Taking too big of bites • New food intolerances • Stricture/stenosis 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chew food 25-30 times • Take tiny bites • Know your fullness cues • Avoid foods that make you ill • Introduce one food at a time • Contact your doctor if it persists
Constipation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Less food intake after surgery • Inadequate fluid intake • High-protein diet • Low-fiber diet • Vitamins, such as iron • Inactivity 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stay hydrated • Take vitamins • Use Milk of Magnesia (OTC) • Dulcolax (OTC) • Sip Smooth Move® tea

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Resources

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▶ **Bariatric Support Group**

Additional Tools

▶ **Join Us**

For more information, please call the Mercy office at **314-251-5890**.

We look forward to meeting you and supporting you where you're at on your journey.

BARIATRIC SUPPORT GROUP

Support groups are a great opportunity to meet with other patients in all phases of life. You can use this space to learn from other people's experience and create supportive relationships throughout your weight loss journey.

Who Should Attend?

All patients are allowed to join, whether you're just starting the program and have questions, or you've already had surgery.

What Is Discussed?

Each month, we discuss a new topic relating to **lifestyle choices** and changes before and after bariatric surgery. Topics include exercise, carbohydrates, importance of vitamins, eating during the holidays and more.

When Do You Meet?

The **fourth Wednesday** of the month from **5 to 6 p.m.**

Where Do You Meet?

The Mercy Center for Performance Medicine & Specialty Care building in the third-floor conference room.

Resources

- Protein Shakes & Powders
- Diet Tips & Tricks
- Kitchen Appliances
- Bariatric Vitamins
- Exercise
- Possible Side Effects
- Bariatric Support Group

► Additional Tools

► Note On Social Media

While social media plays a big part in today's bariatric culture, we advise caution with influencers. This is especially important in the postoperative diet progression phase.

Remember that each bariatric program is different, and something another program or person suggests **might be different than what we'd recommend** to patients.

ADDITIONAL TOOLS

Many tools and additional resources are available to make the preparation and recovery process for you smooth.

<p>WEBSITE</p> <p>American Society for Metabolic and Bariatric Surgery</p> <p>asmbs.org</p>	<p>WEBSITE</p> <p>Bariatric Support Centers International</p> <p>bsciresourcecenter.com</p>	<p>WEBSITE</p> <p>Obesity Help</p> <p>obesityhelp.com/bariatric-recipes</p>
<p>WEBSITE</p> <p>Barilife</p> <p>barilife.com/bariatric-recipes</p>	<p>APP</p> <p>MyFitness Pal</p> <p>myfitnesspal.com</p>	<p>APP</p> <p>Baritastic</p> <p>baritastic.com</p>
<p>APP</p> <p>Fooducate</p> <p>fooducate.com</p>	<p>APP</p> <p>NewTri Health</p> <p>newtrihealth.com</p>	<p>APP</p> <p>Waterlogged</p>
<p>APP</p> <p>HASfit®</p> <p>by Patt Levine, Michelle Bontempo-Saray, hasfit.com</p>	<p>BOOK</p> <p>Eating Well After Weight Loss Surgery</p> <p>William B. Inabnet, MD, Meredith Urban</p>	<p>BOOK</p> <p>The Gastric Sleeve Bariatric Cookbook: Easy Meal Plans and Recipes</p> <p>by Sarah Kent</p>
<p>BOOK</p> <p>The Complete Bariatric Cookbook and Meal Plan: Recipes and Guidance</p> <p>by Megan Moore</p>	<p>BOOK</p> <p>Getting to Goal and Staying There: Lessons from Successful Patients</p> <p>by Terry Simpson, MD</p>	<p>BOOK</p> <p>Before & After: Living and Eating Well After Weight-Loss Surgery (2nd Edition)</p> <p>by Susan Maria Leach</p>

Obesity is a condition you don't have to fight alone.

Mercy's bariatric specialists can help
you lose weight while discovering a
healthier, happier you.

Mercy Clinic Bariatric and General Surgery

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