

Nutritional Expectations after Gastric Bypass

After Gastric-Bypass you will need to make changes to your eating patterns. The diet after surgery progresses from liquid diet to a pureed diet to a soft diet and then a modified regular diet. The diet progression is designed to allow your body to heal.

Initially, It will help you meet your protein and liquid requirements, and later, to assist you in meeting your nutritional needs. It is very important that you follow the diet's progression to maximize healing and minimize the risk for unnecessary complications. **The size of your stomach pouch is about one ounce or one to two tablespoons.**

At first your capacity will be somewhat limited, so be patient. You may find that two to three teaspoons of food fill you up. This is expected. You may also find that you are able to eat more of one type of food than another. That is okay, too. Over time, your food pouch will stretch. By six months after surgery, it may stretch to eight ounces or one cup. Long term, the size of your pouch is likely to be eight to twelve ounces or 1 to 1 ½ cups. This will limit the amount of food you can eat at one time.

One of the changes patients often comment about is the concept of “wasting food.” After surgery your eyes and head still work the same way as they did before. However, because of the new stomach pouch, you will be satisfied with much less. It is critical that you listen to your body's signals of fullness and not to your eyes that see food left on your plate.

You may also be surprised at how the surgery changes your wants and desires for certain foods. Foods you may have previously loved you may now find you are less interested in.

It is common to see some variation from program to program related to nutrition. Just as there are many food options, there are many options and preferences post-operatively. However, most programs agree that the primary source of nutrition should be protein. 70% to 75 % of all calories consumed should be protein based (eggs, fish, meat, etc). Carbohydrates (bread, potatoes, etc.) should make up only 10 to 20%, and fats (butter, cheese, etc.) only 5 to 15% of the calories that you eat. A diet consisting 600 to 800 calories and **75 grams of protein** should be the goal for the first 6 months.

Protein drinks can be helpful to fulfill your protein requirements. There are many to choose from. Look for protein drinks that are low calorie and low sugar and that have a good taste.

Avoid foods which contain sugar. Not only will they slow down your weight loss, but they can make you sick! Sugar may cause “dumping syndrome” in patients who have had the gastric bypass procedure. Dumping, in short, is when sugars go directly from your stomach pouch into the small intestine causing heart palpitations, nausea, abdominal pain and diarrhea. Symptoms may vary among patients. Dumping lasts about 30 minutes to an hour.

To maintain a healthy weight and to prevent weight gain, you must develop and keep healthy eating habits. You will need to be aware of the volume of food that you can tolerate at one time and make healthy food choices to ensure maximum nutrition in minimum volume. A remarkable effect of Bariatric surgery is the progressive change in attitudes towards eating. Patients begin to eat to live – they no longer live to eat. As well, exercise must be part of your daily routine.