

Weight Loss Surgery

Pre-Op Nutrition Guide



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Accountability

Weight loss surgery is only a tool to help you manage your weight. To maintain your weight loss longer-term and improve your overall health, you will need to eat to nourish your body and move your body regularly. This booklet will help guide you, and your dietitian will work with you to achieve your personal goals with weight loss.

What is accountability?

There are some aspects of weight gain or weight loss that are not in your control. These can be things like medical conditions or genetics that you cannot change no matter what you eat or do. What you can change is your behaviors around food and exercise. Accountability means looking at what behaviors work well for you, what may be sabotaging your efforts, and making changes to help yourself.

How to practice accountability

1. Maintain motivation
2. Celebrate success
3. Deal with challenges
4. Monitor your success
5. Get support

Maintain Motivation

There will be times when you feel frustrated, and maintaining the changes you have made feels hard. When you are tempted to not follow through, it may be hard to remember why it is important that you not give up. The motivation to change your life must come from you and what you want for it.

Identify your motivation for losing weight

Everyone wants to lose weight for their own reasons. Take a moment to write down why losing weight is important to you:

Celebrate Success!

You want to focus on every positive change, not just your weight. Often, we reward our efforts with food, so make sure you have some non-food rewards ready to go.

Below are some examples of non-food rewards:

- Read a book or watch a movie
- Take a bath
- Buy a small present for yourself, like comfy socks
- Get your nails or hair done, or plan a spa day
- Post “before and after” photos
- Get tickets or plan an event like a game or concert
- Share your success with friends or family
- Get a massage
- Thank friends and family who have supported you
- Dance to music

Take a moment to identify ways you can celebrate. How will you plan to celebrate your successes?

Go for it and then reflect!

Sometimes trying something that doesn't work helps you find a better solution in the future! If you focus too much on things being perfect, or blame yourself when something doesn't work, you may miss out on finding a better solution.



Deal with Challenges

When encountering a challenge or a difficult time, the one thing that never works is giving up completely. Your team is always available to help you whenever you are struggling.

Learn how to problem solve

Describe the problem:

Avoid blaming and just identify the current challenge. If you are unsure, this is a great time to keep a food journal and make an appointment with your dietitian.

Come up with options:

Find ways to get around the problem.

Choose the best option

Think about what will work best for you, and make a SMART Goal:

A SMART goal will help you make changes by focusing on the path to reach your goal, not just the finish line.

- **Specific** The goal should be specific.
- **Measurable** Make sure you can measure the goal.
- **Achievable** The goal should be both realistic and in your power to change right now.
- **Relevant** This goal should help you achieve the results you want.
- **Time** Name the amount of time you will give yourself to put this goal into practice.

A SMART goal will help you outline a plan for action. For example:

- **Non-SMART goal:** I will walk more.
- **SMART goal:** I will walk around the block three times on Monday, Wednesday, and Friday at 6 p.m. every week for the next four weeks.

Now practice

Write down one SMART goal you would like to work on.

Monitor Your Success

Change, and the results we get from our efforts, are sometimes slower than we expect or desire. Sometimes the changes we make are small, and it is hard to see your own progress. By finding ways to track your progress, you can see how your efforts are helping, and help you stay motivated. Try these suggestions to help monitor your success.

- **Write down and track your weight.**

Studies show that weighing yourself regularly increases the amount of weight you lose, and how long you can keep it off. We recommend weighing yourself about once a week.

- **Write down and track body measurements.**

Use a measuring tape to measure your waist, hips, chest, arms, and thighs. Often you will find your clothing fitting looser even when the scale doesn't show a change in your weight. This is a way to measure that change.

- **Write down all positive changes.**

Sometimes when making changes to lose weight, you have unexpected improvements in other areas of your health, such as more energy or lower blood pressure. Make sure you track these.

- **Keep track of your exercise.**

As you increase your movement or exercise, your body gets better at it!

- **Keep a food journal.**

Many things can affect what we eat, when we eat, and how much we eat. Keeping track of your habits in a food journal or app can help you identify information about your eating that can help you and your dietitian find the right diet solutions for you.



Find Support

There will be times when you might struggle to make or maintain changes. Having support can help you succeed with your goals in the long term.

Your BMC team: Your team is here to support you whether you need medical, nutrition, or behavioral health support. Always attend your appointments and reach out immediately if you need any help.

Friends, family, and community: Reach out to those you trust for help and support. Making lifestyle changes together can help you stay on track and make it easier for you to reach your goals.

Support groups: Patients who attend support groups regularly after weight loss surgery tend to lose more weight and maintain it longer. We offer support groups that focus on both nutrition and emotional eating support.

You can find a full schedule of our upcoming support groups at:
www.bmc.org/weight-loss-surgery/patient-information



Write down where you plan to get support after your weight loss surgery:

Track Your Food

Everyone eats for different reasons, and many things can affect when, what, where, or how much we eat. This makes up a part of your personal relationship with food. The more you understand why you eat, the easier it will be to identify solutions or make changes that will help you with your weight loss goals.

Examples of things that can affect your eating include

- Food that is around you
- Food you grew up eating
- Stress
- Boredom
- Depression or anxiety
- Vacations
- Holidays or celebrations
- Habit
- Hunger
- Work environment
- Where you shop for food
- What your family eats
- Social outings
- Medications
- Medical conditions

Surgery can help you control hunger, and limit how much you can eat in a sitting, but you may need more support identifying when you are eating for reasons besides hunger, as this can derail your goals and lead to weight regain after surgery. Your dietitian will help you with this.

A food journal is a way to collect data on your behavior with food. It can help you identifying what is in your control, and what's not in your control that may impact your eating.

Benefits of keeping food records

- Identify what impacts your eating
- Ensure you are getting enough nutrition in (especially protein)
- Helps you stay mindful, which can prevent mindless eating, boredom eating, or emotional eating

What to track

- Time
- Location
- What you are eating
- What you are drinking
- How you are feeling, and what is going on in the moment
- How hungry you are

Ways to track

You can use a journal or choose from an app below.

Baritastic: www.baritastic.com

Cronometer: www.cronometer.com

Loselt: www.loseit.com

Myfitnesspal: www.myfitnesspal.com

Learn to Read Food Labels

Serving Size

This tells you what amount equals a serving of the food or beverage. Every nutrient value listed on the label is based on this amount.

Calories

Calories are how much energy is in the food. This comes from protein, fat, and carbohydrates.

Total carbohydrate

This is the amount of starch, sugar, and fiber in a serving of food or beverage.

Added sugar

Some foods like fruit or milk naturally contain sugar. The added sugar will tell you how much extra sugar has been added to the food.

Fiber

Fiber helps you feel full, have regular bowel movements, and is great for blood sugar control. Choose products higher in fiber when available.

Nutrition Facts			
Serving Size 3 oz. (240mL)			
Servings Per Container 2			
Amount Per Serving			
Calories 250	Calories from Fat 110		
% Daily Value*			
Total Fat 12g	18%		
Saturated Fat 3g	15%		
Trans Fat 3g			
Cholesterol 30mg	10%		
Sodium 470mg	20%		
Total Carbohydrate 31g	10%		
Dietary Fiber 0g	0%		
Sugars 5g			
Protein 5g			
Vitamin A	4%		
Vitamin C	2%		
Calcium	20%		
Iron	4%		
*Percent Daily Values are based on a 2,000 calorie diet. Your Daily Values may be higher or lower depending on your calorie needs.			
	Calories	2,000	2,500
Total Fat	Less than	65g	80g
Sat Fat	Less than	25g	25g
Cholesterol	Less than	300mg	300mg
Sodium	Less than	2,400mg	2,400mg
Total Carbohydrate		300g	375g
Dietary Fiber		25g	30g

Total Fat

This is the total amount of fat including saturated fat, and unsaturated fat.

Saturated fat may increase your cholesterol so choose foods with less when possible.

Sodium

This tells you how much salt is in the food or beverage. You may be asked by your doctor to limit sodium in your diet if you have certain health issues.

Total carbohydrate

This is the amount of starch, sugar, and fiber in a serving of food or beverage.

Added sugar

Some foods like fruit or milk naturally contain sugar. The added sugar will tell you how much extra sugar has been added to the food.

Protein







Look for products higher in protein when possible.

Measure Your Portions

Have these tools handy for measuring foods:

- Measuring cups
- Measuring spoons
- Food scale

Estimating Portions:

Serving Size	Object	Reference
2 tablespoons	Ping-pong ball	
1 ounce of cheese	4 dice	
3 ounces of meat or poultry	Palm of your hand or a deck of cards	
1/4 cup	Golf ball	
1/2 cup	Tennis ball	
1 cup	Baseball	

Eating After Weight Loss Surgery

Since your stomach is much smaller, you will have a harder time digesting your food comfortably. If you don't follow eating guidelines after surgery, you may have:

- Discomfort
- Pain
- Burping or gas
- Nausea
- Vomiting
- Food sticking
- Frothing or mucus
- Weight gain
- Dumping syndrome

Here are some tips for how to eat after weight loss surgery:

Eat slowly: Plan about 20-30 minutes for each meal. Put down your fork or spoon between bites to help slow down. Consider using a timer if needed.

Take small bites: Keep bites baby-sized, or about the size of a pea.

Chew food well: Chew each bite of food until it is the consistency of applesauce or baby food.

Use small utensils, bowls, and plates: This will prevent over-serving yourself and eating more than is comfortable for your stomach.

Always eat protein first: Protein is essential and you must get it from food to avoid health problems. Eat your protein first to make sure you get it in.

Avoid grazing: The surgery limits how much you can eat at a time, but it will not stop you from snacking throughout the day. Grazing or snacking all day can lead to weight regain.

Eat moist foods: Dry foods may be harder to tolerate, and you will have an easier time with moist foods.

Be careful chewing gum and drinking with straw: These can cause you to swallow extra air, which can cause discomfort. Using a straw can also cause you to sip too much at a time.

Mindful Eating

Mindful eating is a practice where you use all your senses to experience your food, as well as pay attention to your body's response both emotionally and physically. This helps to maintain a positive relationship with food and can make it easier to continue eating foods you enjoy while also trying to eat a healthy diet.

Sit down and breathe.

Try to eat in a quiet place with limited distractions. Before starting to eat, take a few deep breaths in and out. Allow yourself to relax and focus your attention on the present.

Check in with your emotions.

Check in with yourself and how you feel in the moment. Are you feeling hungry? Are you stressed? Are you bored?

Be aware of your food.

Use your senses to experience your food before eating. Think about how the food looks and smells. Are you feeling any strong emotions connected to the food?

Eat with purpose.

Use all your senses when eating. Pay attention to the size of the bite of food, and how it feels and tastes in your mouth. Pay attention to its texture, temperature, and taste. Try to chew for a while and really savor the flavor of your food.

Reflect on the experience.

As you eat, think about how full you feel. Try to stop eating when you are satisfied, and not overly full. How did that meal feel? Did you feel rushed or relaxed? Did you enjoy the food? Were you able to sense when to stop eating?

Set time to practice mindful eating at one meal a day, then two, then three. Eventually mindful eating will become easier to do.



Healthy Eating After Weight Loss Surgery

Your nutritional needs after surgery are the same as they were before, but your stomach is smaller. This means you are limited in the amount of food you can eat and how much food you can absorb after surgery.

Eat every 3-4 hours

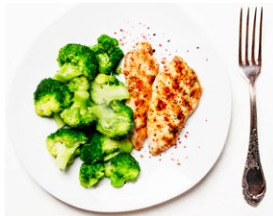
You will only be able to eat a small amount of food in a sitting. This means to you need to eat every 3-4 hours to get all the nutrition your body needs. You cannot skip meals and catch up later in the day. If you are used to skipping meals, start getting in the habit now of eating regular meals.

Prioritize protein

Protein is an essential nutrient, meaning you must get it from your diet. Because of this, you want to eat food high in protein at every meal or snack and eat your protein food first at meals. This way, you don't fill up on low-protein foods.

At first, you will only be able to eat about ¼ cup of food at a time, so you will only be eating protein foods. As you progress and your stomach can fit more food, you can start to add other types of foods.

0-3 months	3-6 months	6-9 months	9-12 months
1/4 cup to 1/2 cup	1/2 cup to 3/4 cup	3/4 cup to 1 cup	1 cup to 1 1/2 cup
Protein	Protein, vegetables & fruit	Protein, vegetables & fruit, starches	Protein, vegetables & fruit, starches



Protein Foods

Protein is an essential nutrient, meaning we cannot make it ourselves, and need to get it from our diet. Our body digests protein slower than other foods, so you feel satisfied for a longer time. Eating enough protein after surgery also helps avoid excessive hair, bone, and muscle loss while you are losing weight.

Cook using low fat cooking methods. This includes poaching, baking, roasting, air frying, sautéing, or you can use a slower cooker. Avoid frying.

Your protein goal before and after surgery is the same. Daily goal (grams): Meal goal (grams):

Portion size	High Protein Food	Protein (grams)
4 ounces (oz.) ¼ pound (lb.) raw	Skinless, boneless chicken	24 g
4 oz. or ¼ pound raw	Skinless, boneless chicken thigh	21 g
2	Skinless, boneless chicken wing	12 g
1	Skinless chicken drumstick	11 g
4 oz. or ¼ lb. raw	93% lean ground beef	21 g
4 oz. or ¼ lb. raw	93% lean ground turkey	24 g
4 oz. or ¼ lb. raw	Skinless turkey breast	27 g
4 oz. or ¼ lb.	Deli turkey, chicken, roast beef, ham	20 g
4 oz. or ¼ lb. raw	Pork loin or pork chop	24 g
4 oz. or ¼ lb. raw	Lean steak, sirloin, or tenderloin	24 g
4 oz. or ¼ lb. raw	Fresh Salmon/fish	21 g
4 oz. or ¼ lb. raw	Shrimp (deveined, no shell)	21 g
4 oz. or ¼ lb. raw	Lobster	15 g
4 oz. or ¼ lb. raw	Scallops	18 g
1	Large egg or 2 egg whites	7 g
6 oz.	Greek or Icelandic yogurt	12-16 g
½ cup	Low-fat or fat-free cottage cheese	14 g
1 oz. or ¼ cup shredded cheese	Low-fat or fat-free cheese	6-7 g
1 cup or 8 fluid oz.	Skim or low-fat milk	8 g
½ cup	Edamame (shelled)	9 g
½ cup	Cooked beans or lentils	7-9 g
2 oz.	Extra firm tofu	6-10 g
5 oz. can	Tuna fish	22 g

Protein amounts are estimates. Please refer to the nutrition facts label for the most accurate measure for the foods you are eating.

Limit to one serving a day and only if tolerated

Portion size	High Protein Food	Protein (grams)
1 oz. or ¼ cup	Pumpkin seeds	9 g
1 oz. or ¼ cup	Almonds, pistachios, sunflower seeds	6 g
1 oz. or ¼ cup	Peanuts	7 g
2 Tbsp.	Peanut butter	7 g
2 Tbsp.	Almond butter	6 g
1 oz. or ¼ cup	Cashews, walnuts	5 g

Protein Goal per Day:

Protein Goal per Meal:



Protein Foods

The following protein foods have about 7 grams of protein per serving.



1 large egg or
2 egg whites



1 oz. chicken
(skinless and boneless)



1 oz. fish



1 oz. shrimp, scallops,
or crab



1 oz. pork loin,
tenderloin, chop



1 oz. 93% ground beef,
chicken, or turkey



1 oz. lean deli turkey,
roast beef, ham,
or chicken



1/3 can tuna in water



1/2 cup beans or lentils



1/2 cup shelled edamame



2 oz. extra firm tofu



1 cup low-fat soy milk



1 oz. low-fat or
fat-free cheese



1/4 cup low-fat
cottage cheese



4 oz. Greek or
Icelandic yogurt



1 cup skim or
low-fat milk



1/4 cup pumpkin seeds



2 tbsp. peanut or
nut butter



1/4 cup peanuts
or nuts



Protein shake

Putting Your Meal Plan Together

Work with your dietitian to plan out your meals. Be sure to include some options that meet your protein and nutrition goals.

Food	Example Menu 1	Example Menu 2
Meal 1 Protein:		
Meal 2 Protein:		
Meal 3 Protein:		
Meal 4 Protein:		

Fruits and Vegetables

Diets rich in fruits and vegetables are linked with overall better health and lower rates of chronic diseases like heart disease and cancer. They are also a great source of vitamins, minerals, antioxidants, fiber, and water, and help keep you feeling full when you eat.

Remember that protein is still the main priority so after surgery. You should only start eating fruits and vegetables when you are comfortably meeting your protein goals.

Vegetables

Serving size: ½ cup cooked or 1 cup raw

Before and after surgery: 3 or more servings a day

- Asparagus
- Broccoli
- Cabbage
- Cauliflower
- Cucumber
- Celery
- Chayote
- Peppers
- Onions
- Garlic
- Collard greens
- Kale
- Spinach
- Brussels sprouts
- Green beans
- Turnips
- Tomatoes
- Carrots
- Mushrooms
- Beets
- Zucchini
- Eggplant

Fruit

Serving size: 1 cup chopped or 1 fist-sized piece of fruit

Before surgery: 1-3 servings a day

After surgery: Eat 1-2 servings a day. Avoid drinking juice and choose fresh or frozen fruits. Fruit naturally contains more sugar than vegetables. Pay attention to portion sizes and avoid grazing or snacking on fruit between meals.

- Strawberries
- Grapes
- Apples
- Pears
- Oranges
- Mango
- Papaya
- Kiwi
- Plums
- Peaches
- Apricots
- Nectarines
- Pineapple
- Bananas
- Blueberries
- Raspberries
- Blackberries
- Watermelon
- Cantaloupe
- Honeydew melon
- Dragon fruit
- Guava
- Passion fruit
- Manzana de oro
- Pomegranate

Healthy Fats

Heart healthy fats are essential to the body and can make meals feel more satisfying. They also help your body absorb vitamins and are key in keeping your immune system, skin, nails, brain, and heart healthy.

Aim for up to one serving per meal or snack.

Portion size	Food	Ways to Use
1/4	Avocado	Add to salads, eggs, tacos
2 Tbsp.	Peanut or Nut Butter	Add to shakes, celery, apple
¼ cup	Peanuts, nuts, seeds	Add to salads, yogurt
½ Tbsp.	Olive Oil, Avocado Oil, Vegetable Oil, Canola Oil	Use for cooking, making salad dressing
1 Tbsp.	Light Margarine Spread	Add to steamed vegetables for flavor
1-2 Tbsp.	Mayonnaise	Use for chicken, tuna, or seafood salad
6	Olives	Add to salads



Starchy Carbohydrates

Starchy carbohydrates are plant-based foods that are high in carbohydrates, like rice, potatoes, or yams. These foods are a great source of energy.

These foods are last priority after surgery because they are so filling. If you have a piece of bread soon after surgery, you may have enough room to eat the protein you need.

Before surgery: 1-2 servings per meal

After surgery: Aim for up to 2 servings a day, as tolerated. Do not add these foods back into your diet until you are comfortably getting in your protein and vegetables. This usually takes about six months.

Some foods may be difficult to tolerate after surgery, including pasta, rice, and bread. These foods can also be easy to overeat, so are often the types of foods that patients struggle with when trying to maintain weight loss after surgery. Remember to prioritize high protein foods and vegetables and eat starchy carbohydrates sparingly.

Serving Size: ½ cup cooked, unless otherwise noted.



Potatoes



Sweet potatoes
or yams



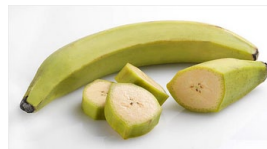
Taro



Corn porridge



Oatmeal



½ plantain



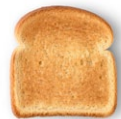
Whole wheat or
whole grain pasta



Rice or brown rice



Corn or whole
wheat tortilla



1 slice bread or toast



Corn or peas



Butternut, acorn, or
pumpkin squash



Beans or lentils



Quinoa, farro, or bulgar



Whole-grain cereal



½ English muffin,
½ 6" pita, or ¼ bagel

Putting Your Meal Plan Together





Work with your dietitian to plan out your meals. Be sure to include some options that meet your protein and nutrition goals.

Food	Example Menu 1	Example Menu 2
Meal 1 Protein:		
Meal 2 Protein:		
Meal 3 Protein:		
Meal 4 Protein:		

Protein Supplements

There will be periods of time after surgery when you will need to use protein supplements to help get enough protein. Some acceptable options are listed below.

Ask your dietitian about any supplements you plan on using that are not on this list.

Protein powder	Ready-to-drink protein shake
150 calories or fewer	200 calories or fewer
20 to 30 grams of protein per serving	20 to 30 grams of protein per serving
4 grams added sugar or less	4 grams added sugar or less
Directions: Mix with 8 oz. skim milk, unsweetened almond milk, or soy milk	
Whey Protein Powder	Whey Ready to Drink Shakes
	
Vegan Protein Powder	Vegan Ready to Drink Shakes
	

Beverages

Goal before and after surgery: 48 – 64 oz. a day

Drinking fluids is an important way to stay hydrated. If you don't drink enough fluids, you may become dehydrated.

Signs and symptoms of dehydration include

- Fatigue
- Dizziness, lightheadedness
- Fainting
- Muscle cramping
- Constipation
- Dry skin
- Dark urine
- Infrequent urination
- Urinary tract infection
- Kidney stones
- Kidney damage
- Gallstones

Beverages to avoid

Caffeine

Avoid caffeine for at least the first month after surgery.

Carbonation

With your stomach being much smaller, having a lot of gas and bubbles in it can be very uncomfortable. You will want to avoid carbonated drinks after surgery.

Alcohol

Your body may not react to alcohol the same way after surgery. We recommend limiting alcohol after surgery for the following reasons:

- Alcohol is high in calories and may lead to weight regain.
- You may get intoxicated faster and stay intoxicated longer.
- You may be at increased risk of developing an alcohol dependence.

Beverages with more than 5 calories per serving

Choose beverages with 5 calories or less per 8 oz. serving.



Beverage Examples



Partial Liquid Pre-Op Diet

Your provider may ask you to follow this diet prior to surgery. This diet incorporates protein shakes and is low in fats and carbohydrates. The purpose of this diet is to:

- Reduce the size of your liver, which reduces the risk of surgery complications.
- Help meet your weight loss goal prior to surgery.
- Help you get used to using protein supplements.

Patients with diabetes that are insulin dependent: Please talk with your primary care doctor to adjust your insulin dosing to prevent low blood sugar levels.

Please have the following every day:

- 2 protein shakes
- 1 solid meal with
 - > 20-30 grams of protein
 - > 1-2 cups non-starchy vegetables
 - > 1 serving of fruit

Or commercial frozen dinner like Lean Cuisine, or Healthy Choice with:

- > 350 calories or fewer
- > At least 20 grams of protein
- > Optional: Add an extra cup of non-starchy vegetables
- Fluids: 48-60 oz. sugar-free beverages
 - > At least 12 oz. of diet or sugar-free electrolyte drink like Powerade Zero or Gatorade Zero

Optional snacks:

- Sugar-free Jell-O
- Greek or Icelandic style yogurt (6 oz.)
- Sugar-free popsicle (up to 2 a day)
- 1 cup chopped fruit or 1 small piece of fruit
- 1 cheese stick or string cheese



Partial Liquid Pre-Op Diet

Example menu 1

Time	Food	Protein (grams)
8 a.m.	Protein shake	20-30 g
10 a.m.	1 apple	
Noon	Protein shake	20-30 g
3 p.m.	Cheese stick	6 g
5 p.m.	4 oz. grilled chicken, 2 cups roasted vegetables, and 1 cup pineapple	28 g
7 p.m.	Sugar-free gelatin	
	Total	74-94 g

Example menu 2

Time	Food	Protein (grams)
8 a.m.	Protein shake	20-30 g
10 a.m.	1 apple	
Noon	Healthy Choice Power Bowl, and 1 cup of steamed frozen vegetables	28 g
3 p.m.	Greek yogurt	12 g
5 p.m.	Protein shake	20-30 g
7 p.m.	Sugar-free gelatin	
	Total	72-92 g



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