Royal Cornwall Hospitals NHS
NHS Trust

Eating following obesity and metabolic surgery









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About this leaflet

Following your bariatric surgery it is important to eat the correct foods in the correct way. This leaflet has been written to help you achieve and maintain significant weight loss following your surgery.

What do I need to remember after bariatric surgery?

Each person can tolerate different foods. To get the most out of your surgery, and achieve the best weight loss results, try to follow these rules:

- **Eat three small regular meals per day** – your stomach pouch will empty slowly so you should stay satisfied for quite a while after eating. Do not over-eat.
- **Eat slowly and chew food well** – stop as soon as you feel satisfied. Take small mouthfuls and monitor how you feel during your meal. Aim to make each meal last between 20-30 minutes. Eating quickly will usually mean your portions will become larger and you will not lose weight. It can also cause pain, discomfort and vomiting. Explain to others why you must eat slowly so they don't rush you. After 30 minutes throw away any food left on your plate or wrap up and store safely for another meal.

  To help you eat your meals at the right pace it is recommended that you chew each small bite 20 times then pause for 60 seconds before taking the next bite. Place your knife and fork down between each mouthful and always eat your meals from a tea plate or small bowl.
- **Eat healthy, normal texture foods** – although for the first six weeks after your surgery you were eating pureed/mashed foods, the effectiveness of your surgery relies on you eating normal textured food. Soft foods slip through your stomach pouch easily and quickly, which may lead to you eating more over the course of the day. Avoid lots of sauces with your meals as this can also speed up the stomach emptying process.
- **Do not eat between meals** – if you are eating three solid meals a day then you should not feel the need to snack.
- **Do not drink with or immediately before your meals** – drinking immediately before eating (less than 30 minutes) will fill you up and you will not be able to eat enough. It may also over-fill your pouch, causing pain. Drinking with your meal speeds up the passage of food through your stomach. For the same reason, avoid fluids for half an hour after you have eaten.

- **Drinks should be calorie-free or low-calorie** – alcohol, regular squash, milkshakes, fruit juices and smoothies all contain a lot of calories and slip through your stomach pouch easily. You should be getting your calories from foods rather than fluids. Aim to drink 6-8 glasses of calorie-free/low-calorie fluids each day.

  For example: water, sugar-free squash, tea or coffee with skimmed milk, small glass of skimmed milk (150ml).
- **Avoid carbonated (fizzy) drinks** – as these can cause bloating and pain.

Your long term eating plan

A healthy balanced diet is made up of the five main food groups – below is a guide to the quantities that you should be aiming for.

Protein foods

Meat, fish, eggs and alternatives (such as tofu and Quorn). Try to have 2-3 portions per day (60-90g (2-3oz) in total) and include protein at each meal.

Fruit and vegetables

Aim for 5 small portions per day. Fresh, frozen, canned and dried fruit and vegetables all count. As a guide, a normal portion of fruit is one medium-sized piece (eg an apple, orange or pear) or two smaller fruits (such as two plums, satsumas or kiwis). A portion of vegetables is about 2-3 tablespoons cooked. Fruit juice counts towards your 5-a-day although one medium glass (150ml) of unsweetened fruit juice or smoothie counts as one portion only. Potatoes do not count and are classed as a carbohydrate (see below).

Milk and dairy

Choose low fat dairy products such as milk, yoghurts and cheese. Limit cheese to 30-60g (1-2oz) per day of the half fat varieties. Try skimmed milk rather than semi-skimmed and avoid whole milk and milkshakes. Try fat-free/diet yogurts rather than thick and creamy or luxury varieties.

Carbohydrates/starchy foods

These include bread, cereals (rice and pasta included) and potatoes. Many people find that wholemeal or granary breads and crackers/crispbreads are more easily digested than soft, white breads. Try to have a small portion (60-90g, 2-3oz) of starchy food at each meal.

Foods containing fats or sugars

Avoid foods high in fat, calories and sugar such as sweets, chocolate, crisps and nuts. Good alternatives include fat-free yoghurts or rice puddings, diet cereal bars and low fat crackers. Use only a very small amount of olive oil in cooking if needed or replace with a low-calorie cooking spray.

Problem foods

You may have problems tolerating some foods. They may get stuck and cause you to vomit. In particular stringy fruits and vegetables can be problematic, as can soft 'claggy' foods such as fresh bread. Eat these items with caution and ensure that you chew each mouthful well:

- tough/dry meats
- asparagus, broccoli stalks, green beans, cabbage, spinach
- pineapple, rhubarb, oranges and other citrus fruits
- dried fruits
- pips, pith, skins and seeds from fruit and vegetables
- non-toasted bread
- over-cooked pasta and boiled rice
- nuts
- popcorn.

Foods that are very spicy, acid, fatty, hot or cold may also cause some problems.

Getting food stuck

If you get a piece of food stuck in your stomach pouch this can be quite uncomfortable. The first advice is not to panic, as most times it will eventually dislodge of its own accord. To help move the food item on, bending over the toilet in the head down position may be enough to dislodge it. You can also try taking tiny sips of a hot drink over a period of an hour. This may be the one time when fizzy drinks are beneficial as the bubbles may help the food to dislodge.

If the food doesn't dislodge on its own and / or you would like advice or support after the event please contact the bariatric nurse specialist on 07789 615828.

Controlling portions

The surgery that you have had, or will have, is a tool to help you to lose weight. However, its eventual success will depend on how well you can change your eating habits. Developing new eating habits will ensure that your weight loss is safe and successful.

Remember – the way you eat is just as important as what you eat.

Your new eating habits should be based around the following points:

- eat small portions (tea plate sized meal)
- chew foods well (at least 20 times) and appreciate them
- eat slowly (wait 60 seconds between mouthfuls and take 20 to 30 minutes over your meals)
- eat at regular intervals without grazing
- plan your meals and snacks in advance
- eat meals and snacks on time, at set times
- follow a healthy portion controlled diet.

How many calories do I need?

We all have different needs, depending on our age, gender, activity levels and body weight. To lose weight you need to take in fewer calories and be more physically active. To lose weight, you need to eat 500 to 600 calories fewer than your daily calorific needs.

Guideline daily amounts for weight loss: 1500 calories a day

This table shows how many servings of different foods you can have per day:

Food type	**To total 1500 calories**
Fruit and vegetables	6
Starchy foods	6
Dairy	3
Protein	2
Fats	2
Extras	150 calories

The following tables show what size makes up a typical serving of different foods.

Protein Foods	**One serving is:**
Raw lean meat eg beef, pork, lamb, chicken (without skin)	Size of a pack of playing cards (100g)
Ham, turkey	3 thin slices
Fish eg salmon, trout, cod, haddock, tuna, mackerel	Size of a cheque book (100g)
Fish Fingers	3
Eggs (not fried)	2
Baked beans	4 tablespoons
Lentils, kidney beans, chick peas, butter beans	4 tablespoons
Nuts	2 tablespoons

Dairy Foods	**One serving is:**
Skimmed or semi skimmed milk	1 medium glass / 1/3 of a pint
Yoghurt, diet/low fat	1 small pot (150g)
Fromage frais light	1 small pot (150g)
Low fat cheese ege.g. brie, camembert, edam, reduced fat cheddar	1 matchbox size piece
Light cream cheese	2 small matchbox size pieces
Cottage cheese	1 large pot (200g)
Soya milk	1/3 pint
Soya dessert / yoghurt	1 small pot (150g)

Fruit and vegetables	**One serving is:**
Vegetables	
Cooked vegetables e.g. broccoli, cauliflower, carrots	3 tablespoons
Side salad	Size of a cereal bowl
Tomatoes	1 tomato or 6-8 cherry
Fruit	
Tinned fruit eg peaches, pears, raspberries	3 tablespoons
Stewed fruit eg apple, rhubarb, cherries	4 tablespoons
Melon	1 slice
Grapes	12
Apricots	2
Plums	2
Strawberries	7

Fruit and vegetables	One serving is:
Fruit juice (maximum 1 per day)	1 small glass or carton (100ml)
Apple, pear, banana, orange, peach	1 piece
Dried apricots	3
Raisins, sultanas	1 tablespoon

Carbohydrates	One serving is:
Breakfast cereals e.g. flakes/crispies	
Dry porridge oats	3 tablespoons
Muesli	2 tablespoons
Muesli bar	1
Shredded wheat/Weetabix	1
Toast or bread	1 slice
Roll or bagel	Half
Crackers/ Crispbreads	3 (small)
Chapatti	1 (small)
Rice - cooked	2 heaped tablespoons
Pasta, noodles or couscous - cooked	2 tablespoons
Potatoes	2 egg size
Jacket potato	Half
Sweet potato	100g (4oz)
Mash potato	2 tablespoons
Chips	8 oven chips
Pitta bread	1 mini, half
Tortilla wrap	Half

Fats	One serving is
Butter or margarine	1 teaspoon
Reduced or low fat spread	2 teaspoons
Salad dressings: Mayonnaise Reduced fat/light mayonnaise/salad cream/french dressing or oil based salad dressing	1 teaspoon
Oil (any type)	2 teaspoons

Planning meals

People who have successfully lost weight and managed to keep it off, say two of the main things that helped them are:

1. Planning meals and snacks in advance.
2. Eating at regular intervals.

Below is an example of a **1500 kcal daily eating plan** with the three meals spaced out evenly over the day.

Breakfast:	2 carbohydrate portion
	1 dairy portion
	1 Piece of fruit
Lunch:	2 carbohydrate portions
	1 fat portion
	1 protein portion
	2 vegetable/ fruit portions
Evening:	2 carbohydrate portions
	1 protein portion
	1 fat portion
	2 vegetable/ fruit portion
	1 dairy portion
Snacks/ Extras:	1/3rd pint of milk for tea / coffee
	2x pieces of fruit as snacks between meals

Breakfast ideas

- Bowl of your favourite cereal with strawberries and skimmed hot milk.
- Baked beans on toast.
- Bowl of muesli, with a pot of low fat yoghurt and a glass of fruit juice.
- 2 slices of toast with light cream cheese and a glass of fruit juice.
- 2 Weetabix, with stewed cherries and skimmed milk.
- 2 slices of toast with 2 poached or scrambled eggs. Served with 1 grilled tomato.

Light meal ideas

- Crisp breads with tuna in brine. Served with side salad and small amount of low calorie mayonnaise/dressing.
- Crackers with low fat cheese eg brie, and grapes.
- Medium jacket potato with cottage cheese and side salad.
- 2 slices of toast with sardines or pilchards in tomato sauce. Served with sliced tomato.
- 2 egg omelette with 2 slices of toast and low fat spread.

Main meal ideas

- Vegetable risotto, served with parmesan cheese.
- Bolognaise sauce and small well-cooked pasta shapes, served with a side salad.
- Fish pie with low fat white sauce topped with mashed potato. Served with broccoli and cauliflower.
- Chicken/beef/pork or lamb casserole, cooked with onion, mushrooms and carrots. Served with a jacket potato.
- Shepherds or cottage pie, with broccoli and cauliflower.

Buying and using 'ready-made' meals

- Ready prepared low calorie meals are acceptable for occasional use.
- They usually tend to be low in dietary fibre, so add vegetables or salad for a more balanced and filling meal.
- These meals can also contain a lot of salt, so should not be eaten every day.
- Aim for complete meals that are less than 450 calories.

Contact us

The Bariatric Team at Royal Cornwall Hospital are available to talk to all patients, relative and carers by telephone during normal working hours.

Bariatric Surgery Clinical Nurse Specialist – 07789 615828 or 01872 252133.

Weight Management / Bariatric Dietitians – 01872 254569.

If you would like this leaflet in large print, braille, audio version or in another language, please contact the Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS) on 01872 252793

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