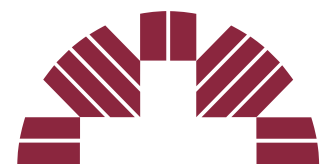


# Bariatric Surgery Guide



MOUNT CARMEL

A close-up photograph of several bright green, serrated leaves on a thin brown branch, set against a soft, out-of-focus background of more green foliage. The lighting is bright and natural, highlighting the veins on the leaves.

# Welcome

Bariatric surgery can help you lose weight and improve your quality of life. Long-term behavior changes are needed to maintain a healthy weight after bariatric surgery. It is important to view the surgery as a tool to help you reach your goal. The best advice for success is to take personal responsibility, have a positive mindset and create healthy habits to replace old lifestyle choices.

Your healthcare team with the Mount Carmel Bariatric Program is here to help you through your weight loss journey.

# Table of Contents

<b>Preparing for Your Bariatric Surgery</b> ..... 4	Mild Pain or Headache..... 16
Steps to a Healthier You..... 4	Cold or Cough ..... 16
Quitting Smoking..... 4	Menstrual Cramping ..... 16
Bariatric Pre-Admission Instructions ..... 5	Difficulty Swallowing or Food Intolerance ..... 16
Preparing Your Skin with Chlorhexidine Gluconate (CHG) Solution ..... 6	Building New Habits to Avoid Mindless Eating ..... 16
Your Surgery..... 7	Weight Loss Plateaus ..... 16
Laparoscopic Versus Open Surgery..... 7	Pregnancy After Bariatric Surgery ..... 17
<b>What to Expect After Surgery</b> ..... 8	Hair Loss After Bariatric Surgery..... 17
Goals for Discharge..... 8	Plastic Surgery ..... 17
Activity..... 8	<b>Physical Activity: Committing to Daily Exercise</b> ..... 18
Medications..... 8	Walking ..... 18
Breathing Exercises..... 9	Aerobic Exercise ..... 18
Your Diet After Surgery ..... 9	Strength Training ..... 19
Preparing for Discharge ..... 11	Goals and Motivation ..... 19
<b>Caring for Yourself at Home</b> ..... 12	<b>Lifetime Bariatric Follow-up Care</b> ..... 20
Medications..... 12	Support ..... 21
General Care ..... 13	Notes ..... 22
Your Diet at Home..... 14	
<b>Common Concerns After Bariatric Surgery</b> ..... 15	
Fatigue..... 15	
Constipation ..... 15	
Diarrhea..... 15	
Gas/Bloating/Flatulence ..... 15	
Nausea and Vomiting..... 15	

# Preparing for Your Bariatric Surgery

## Steps to a Healthier You

There are important steps you should take in the weeks before your surgery:

- ▶ **Stay active.** Exercise helps strengthen your body and is an important part of good health. Having an exercise plan in place will help you recover from surgery and get back into an exercise routine after surgery. Walking is a great exercise! Set a goal of 30 minutes of exercise each day. Gradually increase your activity as you are able. Ask your bariatric team for guidance.
- ▶ **Eat a well-balanced diet** with a variety of foods and plenty of protein to help with healing and recovery.
- ▶ **Drink at least 64 ounces of water or sugar-free liquids.** Being well hydrated can help decrease nausea and complications after surgery.
- ▶ **Avoid people with coughs, colds and other infections.** Call your doctor if you have a fever, cold or flu symptoms, or any other changes to your health during the week before your surgery.
- ▶ **Use your incentive spirometer** if you have been given one. Bring it to the hospital with you.
- ▶ **Do not take any non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (NSAIDs) for 2 weeks before surgery. You will not be able to take NSAIDs for the rest of your life after your surgery.** Do not take any medications, supplements or vitamins without approval from your surgeon. Ask your doctor about taking low-dose aspirin. Talk with your doctor or pharmacist if you have any questions.

## Quitting Smoking

It is very important that you quit smoking **at least** 6 weeks before your surgery and stay smoke-free afterward.

### Smoking:

- ▶ Stimulates stomach acid production and can lead to gastric ulcers
- ▶ Slows healing, increasing the risk of wound complications
- ▶ Greatly increases the risk of blood clots, infections, pneumonia, strokes and heart attacks
- ▶ Affects your lungs, breathing and oxygen levels
- ▶ Weakens your immune system
- ▶ Increases your heart rate and blood pressure

You can quit smoking with the right tools and support. Our Mount Carmel pharmacists are trained to help you quit smoking. The support of professional counseling makes it twice as likely you'll quit successfully.

**Ask your healthcare provider to place a referral to Mount Carmel's Smoking Cessation Program. To learn more, call 614-234-8844.**

# Bariatric Pre-admission Instructions

## Two Weeks Before Surgery

In the 2 weeks before your bariatric surgery, you must follow strict dietary guidelines to decrease the fat content of your liver. This is called the "liver shrink" diet.

You must:

- Avoid all greasy, fatty foods.
- Eat a diet of leafy greens, vegetables, fruits and lean meats.
- Drink 64 ounces of water daily.

You must also follow any other dietary guidelines set by your nurse practitioner or dietitian. You will be asked to sign an agreement that you will follow these dietary guidelines before your surgery. Failure to do so may result in your surgery being canceled.

## The Day Before Surgery

- Eat a smaller portion of your regular breakfast.
- Starting at 12 noon, only drink sugar-free clear liquids.
- Shower with the special CHG soap or antibacterial soap as directed by your surgeon. See the instructions below.
- Do not eat or drink starting at midnight the night before your surgery EXCEPT for 2 Ensure Clear nutritional beverages.
- **Drink one Ensure Clear 12 hours before your surgery time.**
- **Drink one Ensure Clear 3 hours before your surgery time.**

**My surgery time is:** \_\_\_\_\_

- I drank Ensure Clear 12 hours before surgery at** \_\_\_\_\_
- I drank Ensure Clear 3 hours before surgery at** \_\_\_\_\_

## The Morning of Surgery

- Shower again with the special CHG soap as instructed or use antibacterial soap.
- Take your medications as instructed by your doctor with a small sip of water.
- Drink only the Ensure Clear nutritional drink as instructed.

### REMEMBER:

- The day before surgery, eat a smaller portion of your regular breakfast.
- Starting at 12 noon, only drink sugar-free clear liquids.
- Do not drink liquids with caffeine or carbonation.
- Do not smoke, eat, drink, chew gum or eat mints or candy starting at midnight the night before surgery.
- **Only drink the Ensure Clear as instructed.**

### ACCEPTABLE CLEAR LIQUIDS INCLUDE:

- Water
- Sugar-free flavoring such as Crystal Light or MiO drops
- Sugar-Free Gatorade®
- Sugar-Free Kool-Aid®
- Sugar-Free Jell-O®
- Sugar-Free Popsicles

- ▶ Clear juices **with added water (50/50)**: apple, cranberry, grape
- ▶ Sugar-Free Lemonade without pulp, fruit punch, powdered fruit mixes
- ▶ Decaffeinated coffee or tea (No cream or milk added)
- ▶ Broth, bouillon

#### **YOU MAY NOT DRINK:**

- ▶ Milk, smoothies or other dairy products
- ▶ Orange juice, fruit nectars or vegetable juices
- ▶ Caffeinated or carbonated drinks
- ▶ Alcohol

## Preparing Your Skin with Chlorhexidine Gluconate (CHG) Solution

Infection is a risk with any surgery. To help reduce the risk:

- ▶ Your surgeon may ask you to wash your body using a special soap that has an antiseptic called chlorhexidine gluconate (CHG).
- ▶ Do not shave below the neck 2 days before your surgery.
- ▶ Put clean sheets on the bed you will be sleeping in the night before surgery.

## The Night Before and Morning of Surgery

If your surgeon has directed that you use a CHG product (Hibiclens™, Dyna-Hex™ and others), use half the bottle the night before and the other half the morning of your surgery.

Follow these steps as you shower:

- ▶ Shower or bathe as usual with soap and water, then wash off the soap completely. If you plan to wash your hair, use regular shampoo on your hair and rinse well.
- ▶ Thoroughly rinse your entire body with warm water from the neck down. Turn off the water or step out from under the shower stream to avoid rinsing the CHG soap off too soon.
- ▶ Apply the CHG product directly to your skin from the neck down and wash gently.
  - **DO NOT** use above your neck, in your genital area or on wounds that are deeper than a scratch.
  - **DO NOT** touch your eyes, ears or mouth while scrubbing.
- ▶ Pay special attention to washing the area of your surgical procedure very well. Use a back and forth motion to gently scrub the area.
- ▶ Allow the product to remain on your skin for 2 to 3 minutes.
- ▶ Turn on the water or step back under the shower stream to rinse well. Do not use regular soap after applying and rinsing the product.
- ▶ Pat your skin dry with a clean soft towel.
- ▶ Do not use any makeup, perfume, powder, lotion or cream after you have showered.
- ▶ Put on clean nightwear or clothes.

**Repeat these steps the morning of your surgery.**

It is a good idea to read the label for full product information and precautions. Do not use this product if you are allergic to it. If your skin becomes red or irritated, stop using the solution and contact your surgeon for further instructions.

## What to Bring

- Bring in dentures, hearing aids and eyeglasses with their cases (label with your name).
- Bring comfortable, loose-fitting clothing for your hospital stay.
- To make your stay more comfortable, you may bring your own pajamas, robe, non-skid slippers and toiletries.
- If you use a CPAP or BiPAP, please have this with you in the pre-operative ("pre-op") area.
- Bring a current list of your medications and allergies.
- Have your driver's license and insurance card, along with a credit card or money for any co-payments.
- Bring a copy of your Living Will and/or Health Care Power of Attorney, if applicable.

## What Not to Bring

- Do not wear jewelry and remove piercings before your surgery.
- Please leave all valuables such as jewelry, keys and electronic devices at home. After registering for your surgery, plan to give your purse/wallet, checkbook, credit cards, cell phone and any other valuables to your support person to be responsible for these items. It is recommended that these items are taken home.
- Leave your medications at home unless you have been instructed to bring them to the hospital.

## Your Surgery

At the scheduled arrival time, go to the Welcome Center in the Main Entrance of Mount Carmel Grove City hospital. You will be registered and directed to the pre-op area where you will be prepared for surgery. Your surgeon and anesthesiologist will see you before surgery and answer any remaining questions.

After surgery, you will be closely monitored in the Post-Anesthesia Care Unit (PACU) while you recover and wake up from anesthesia. Your length of stay in PACU will depend on the type of surgery you have and how you are feeling. This is often 1 to 2 hours, but may be longer. Expect to stay in the hospital 1 to 2 days after surgery.

## Laparoscopic Versus Open Surgery

Laparoscopic surgery involves several small incisions. Open surgery involves one large incision.

There are times when your surgeon may need to perform an open surgery when an attempted laparoscopic surgery is not possible. Your surgeon will discuss this possibility and answer your questions.



# What to Expect After Surgery

Knowing what to expect during your hospital stay can help you feel more comfortable. Although this is a general plan of your care, your recovery may vary. Your healthcare team will monitor you carefully and care for your individual needs.

## Goals for Discharge

Plan on being in the hospital 1 or 2 days. How long you stay depends on how quickly you are able to meet certain goals. Before you can be discharged, you will need to:

- ▶ Eat 2 bariatric full liquid meals.
- ▶ Have no dry heaving or vomiting.
- ▶ Drink an adequate amount of fluids.
- ▶ Urinate (pee) without problems.
- ▶ Have no signs of infection, such as a fever.
- ▶ Walk independently at least every 4 hours.
- ▶ Do most self-care activities by yourself.
- ▶ Have your pain controlled with oral pain medications.

## Activity

Getting moving soon after surgery is a very important part of your recovery. Being in bed too long can cause blood clots, muscle weakness and decreased bowel function.

**After surgery, you will walk in the hall 4 hours from the time you arrive to your hospital room and every 4 hours after. This is required.**

- ▶ You will use a walker the first time you walk in the hall. Your healthcare team will help you.
- ▶ Ask for an abdominal binder to help make you more comfortable.
- ▶ Gradually increase how far you walk. You may need to rest frequently at first.
- ▶ Get up in the chair for meals.
- ▶ Continue walking at least every 4 hours (while you are awake) every day for 6 weeks after discharge.

## Medications

- ▶ The stress of surgery can make your blood glucose (sugar) rise, which slows the healing process. Your blood glucose will be closely monitored after surgery. If your blood glucose is high, your surgeon may order intravenous (IV) insulin.
- ▶ Pills will have to be taken one at a time and separated by 10 to 15 minutes (this will continue at home).
- ▶ Pills larger than the size of an M&M candy should be cut in half before taking. EXCEPTION: Capsules, gel capsules or extended release medications cannot be cut and must be taken "as is."
- ▶ Your healthcare team will help keep your pain and nausea under control, which will help you to tolerate your diet.





## Breathing Exercises

- Use an incentive spirometer to exercise your lungs 10 times every hour while you are awake.
- Cough and deep breathe to expand and clear your lungs. Support your incision with a pillow or folded blanket when you cough and deep breathe. This will ease the discomfort.

## Your Diet After Surgery

It is important to follow the instructions you are given after surgery. Refer to the chart for more information about how your diet will advance. Remember these important points:

- You will start with sips of clear liquids after surgery and will begin drinking more fluids as you are able.
- Drink **slowly**.
- Extremes in temperature (hot or cold) can be difficult on your new stomach. Room temperature water may be best.
- As you finish your medicine cups of clear liquids, stack your empty cups at the bedside. A member of the healthcare team will refill and record your intake.
- You can bring sugar-free and caffeine-free clear liquids from home, if preferred.
- You will have a bariatric clear liquid tray for breakfast the morning after surgery.
- You will be expected to drink 8 medicine cups of water or sugar-free clear liquids between 6 a.m. and 12 p.m. the morning after surgery. After this is done, your nurse will be able to stop your IV fluids.
- For lunch, you will get a bariatric full liquid diet. Start using the “20-20-20” or “30-30-30” rule.

**You will need eat two bariatric full liquid meals (lunch and dinner) before you are discharged home.**

- Your first full day at home, your goal is 6 full liquid meals a day.




### Follow the “20-20-20” or “30-30-30” rule:


- Stop eating or drinking 20 to 30 minutes before your meal.
- Take 20 to 30 minutes to eat your meal. Do not take clear liquids with meals.
- Wait 20 to 30 minutes after finishing your meal before drinking again.

## Gas Pain After Surgery

If you have **laparoscopic surgery**, you may experience pain in your shoulder and abdomen from CO<sub>2</sub> gas that remains inside your abdominal cavity after your procedure. This trapped gas can be very uncomfortable but it will eventually go away. Pain medication may help, and walking is helpful in moving the gas. You may also try a change in position, heat or ice.

Intestinal gas pain, while also uncomfortable, is due to the build-up of gas inside the intestines. During surgery, the bowel can slow and prevent the passage of gas and stool. Walking is the most important thing you can do to relieve gas pain.

	<b>POST-OP: DAY OF SURGERY</b>	<b>POST-OP: DAY 1 UNTIL DISCHARGE</b>	<b>HOME</b>
<b>Activity</b> 	<input type="checkbox"/> Walk in the hallway 4 hours after arrival to the floor and every 4 hours afterwards.	<input type="checkbox"/> Walk in the hallway every 4 hours. <input type="checkbox"/> Sit up in the chair for meals.	<input type="checkbox"/> Walk every 4 hours while awake. <input type="checkbox"/> Get 60 minutes of focused activity a day (walking only for the first 6 weeks).
<b>Diet</b> 	<input type="checkbox"/> You will be started on a bariatric clear liquid diet. <input type="checkbox"/> <b>Drink water SLOWLY.</b> 1 medicine cup=8-10 minutes. <input type="checkbox"/> <b>Do not refill your own cups.</b> Your nurse/tech will refill the cups and chart your intake. <input type="checkbox"/> You may get a bariatric clear liquid meal tray for dinner. <i>Drink slowly.</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ If you get juice on your clear liquid tray, you must dilute 50/50 with water.</li> <li>▶ You many have decaf coffee but do not add creamer.</li> <li>▶ All items must be caffeine-free, carbonation-free and low-sugar/sugar-free.</li> </ul>	<input type="checkbox"/> Drink 8 medicine cups of water/sugar-free clear liquids between 6 a.m. and 12 p.m. <input type="checkbox"/> <b>Breakfast:</b> Bariatric Clear Liquids <input type="checkbox"/> <b>Lunch:</b> Bariatric Full Liquids <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Use the “30-30-30” rule.</li> <li>▶ Take 2 medicine cups (¼ cup) and fill with whatever full liquid item you want. This is your meal.</li> <li>▶ You do not have to finish both cups if you become full.</li> <li>▶ You will need to have two bariatric full liquid meals (lunch and dinner) before going home.</li> </ul>	<input type="checkbox"/> Your first full day at home, have 6 full liquid meals a day. Continue for the first 2 weeks after surgery. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ ¼ to ½ cup per meal, stop if you become full.</li> <li>▶ Continue to use the “30-30-30” rule.</li> <li>▶ Drink 64 fluid oz. of water or sugar-free clear liquids each day.</li> <li>▶ Get 65 to 75 grams of protein each day.</li> </ul>
<b>General Care</b> 	<input type="checkbox"/> You may have a foley catheter to drain urine. <input type="checkbox"/> You may have a JP drain. <input type="checkbox"/> Use the incentive spirometer 10 x each hour, while awake. <input type="checkbox"/> Wear sequential compression devices (SCDs) while in bed.	<input type="checkbox"/> Foley catheter will be taken out at 6 AM, if applicable. <input type="checkbox"/> If you have a JP drain, it will be taken out at your follow-up appointment. <input type="checkbox"/> Use the incentive spirometer 10 x each hour, while awake. <input type="checkbox"/> Wear SCDs while in bed.	<input type="checkbox"/> Keep your incision(s) clean and dry. Check daily for signs of infection. <input type="checkbox"/> Care for your incision and drains (if applicable) as you are instructed. <input type="checkbox"/> Use the incentive spirometer 10 x each hour, while awake.

<p><b>Medications</b></p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> You will get IV fluids overnight.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Take one pill at a time. Wait 10 to 15 minutes between each pill.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> <b>In addition to other medicines, you may get:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Antibiotics</li> <li>▶ Insulin, as needed</li> <li>▶ Anti-nausea medication, as needed</li> <li>▶ Pain medication, as needed</li> <li>▶ Medicine to prevent blood clots</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> IV fluids will be stopped after you finish oral intake goal between 6 a.m. and 12 p.m. Your IV will stay in.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Continue to take one pill at a time waiting 10 to 15 minutes in between.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Restart your home medications.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Continue to take one pill at a time and wait for 10 to 15 minutes between.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Take acetaminophen (Tylenol) for pain as instructed. <b>Do not take NSAIDs</b> (such as Motrin, Aleve, Advil).</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Take new prescriptions and home medications as ordered. Call your bariatric surgeon with questions.</li> </ul>
---	---	---	--

## Preparing for Discharge

Talk with your nurse or case manager about any discharge needs. Your nurse will teach you how to care for yourself at home. This will include how to care for your incision, activity goals and restrictions and what medications you should take.

Your surgeon may place a bulb suction drain (often called a Jackson-Pratt or "JP" drain). The drain removes fluid from the wound and helps the incision heal. If applicable, you will be taught how to care for the drain. It will be removed at your first appointment in your surgeon's office 7 to 10 days after surgery.

Before leaving the hospital, make sure you understand your follow-up care and who to contact if you have problems or questions.

You must make an appointment to be seen by your primary care physician within 1 to 2 weeks after your surgery.

# Caring for Yourself at Home

## Medications

- In general, you should restart your normal home medications after surgery. However, it is important to ask your surgeon for specific instructions about taking your usual prescription medications, over-the-counter medications or supplements.
- Only take one medication every 10 to 15 minutes for at least the first 6 weeks after surgery.
- Do not take NSAIDs after bariatric surgery.

Medications you will likely be prescribed for home include:

- Pain medication, which is taken as needed.
- Anti-nausea medication, which is taken as needed.
- Medication to prevent ulcers, which is taken for 3 months.
- Medication to prevent gallstones (if you have a gallbladder), which is taken for 6 months.
- Blood clot prevention medication, which is taken for 30 days.

### For patients with diabetes or high blood pressure:

Check your blood pressure and/or blood glucose before each dose of medication after surgery.

- Before taking your medication, check your blood pressure. **Do not take your blood pressure medication if your blood pressure is below 110/70.** Call the doctor who prescribed the medication for instructions.
- Before taking your medication, check your blood glucose. **Do not take your diabetes medication if your blood glucose is below 80.** Call the doctor who prescribed the medication for instructions.

If you have dizziness or changes in your mental status, recheck your blood pressure and/or blood glucose. Your primary care physician may start to decrease the dose of your medications at your follow-up appointment (1 to 2 weeks after surgery). Contact them with questions or concerns.



## General Care

- ▶ Plan for someone to be with you for at least the first day after you get home from the hospital.
- ▶ You will not be able to drive until cleared by your surgeon. Do not drive while taking narcotic pain medication.
- ▶ Do not ride in a car for more than 1 hour without getting out and walking for 10 minutes.
- ▶ You may shower. Do not take a tub bath or use a hot tub or swimming pool for at least 3 weeks (or until your incision is healed).
- ▶ Walk every 4 hours while you're awake.
- ▶ Do not have sexual activity for 3 weeks.
- ▶ Continue to use your incentive spirometer every 2 hours while you're awake.
- ▶ Avoid sitting for long periods of time.
- ▶ Plan to be off work until your surgeon says you can return to work.
- ▶ Do not lift anything over 5 to 10 pounds for 6 weeks.
- ▶ You may climb stairs slowly.
- ▶ Quit all nicotine and tobacco for at least 6 weeks after surgery.
- ▶ Practice good hygiene. Always wash your hands before and after caring for your incision and ask others to do so.
- ▶ Take your temperature if you feel like you have a fever or chills.
- ▶ Check your incision for signs of infection every day.

If you need to contact a bariatric specialist, please leave a detailed message with your surgeon's office at 614-228-0768.

### **Call your surgeon if you have any of these signs or symptoms:**

- ▶ Increase of redness, swelling or bleeding to your incision
- ▶ Increase in the amount of drainage
- ▶ Drainage that smells bad or changes in color
- ▶ Opening or separation of incision(s)
- ▶ Fever of 100.4° F or higher
- ▶ Cramping in calf with walking or pain, redness and/or swelling in your arm or leg
- ▶ Lightheadedness or fainting
- ▶ New or worsening pain
- ▶ Swollen abdomen
- ▶ No bowel movement within 4 days after discharge
- ▶ Diarrhea that lasts more than 3 days
- ▶ Nausea and vomiting that won't go away
- ▶ If you feel that something is not right

If you feel you need emergency care, go to the Mount Carmel Grove City Emergency Room where a bariatric specialist will be available. Go to the Mount Carmel Grove City Emergency Room if you have:

- ▶ Nausea or vomiting for more than 4 hours and are unable to keep clear liquids down
- ▶ Severe abdominal pain lasting longer than 4 hours.

**Call 911 if you have chest pain, shortness of breath, racing heart beat without exertion or any medical emergency.**

## Expectations at Home

It is important to follow the “60-60-60” rule for recovery and weight loss success. It’s called “The Balancing Act.”

### Drink 64 fluid oz. of water or sugar-free clear liquids per day.

- The leading cause of hospital readmission following bariatric surgery is dehydration. If you become nauseous after hospital discharge, you are likely dehydrated. Prioritize drinking water in addition to taking your prescribed anti-nausea medication.
- Because you will not be allowed to drink 20 to 30 minutes before, during and after meals, you **must** sip water frequently between meals to reach your daily minimum of 64 oz.
- Sugar-free and caffeine-free clear liquid items, such as popsicles, gelatin, broth, zero-sports drinks, water additives/ sweeteners, decaf black coffee or decaf tea can be used along with water to fill your hydration requirements.

### Consume 65 to 75 grams of protein per day.

- Protein can come from the foods you eat or be mixed in using powders.
- Protein water is very helpful, as it provides you with both protein AND hydration.
- Protein combined in anything water-based counts toward hydration.
- Protein combined in anything milk-based (such as a protein shake) counts as a **meal** and needs to be **portion controlled**. You must follow the “20-20-20” or “30-30-30” rule and take this separate from water or other clear liquid items.

### Get 60 minutes of focused activity each day.

- For the first 6 weeks, you will only be **walking**. This allows you to heal properly and avoids excessive sweating, which helps reserve your body’s water. After 6 weeks you will be cleared by your surgeon to do more strenuous activity.
- The 60 minutes of activity can be broken up over the course of your day.
- This activity does not include regular household activities.
- Be active! The more activity you do, the more energy you will have.



# Common Concerns After Bariatric Surgery

Here are some simple solutions to help address common concerns after bariatric surgery.

## Fatigue

You will need time to recover from your surgery. You may feel tired and it often takes several weeks to regain your usual energy level. Problems with nausea, vomiting, diarrhea, low blood counts and nutrition make you feel tired as well. The best thing to do is stay active. Walking can help your energy level. Make sure to meet your daily liquid and protein goals.

## Constipation

You should start passing gas 1 to 2 days after surgery. Start taking Miralax powder if you have not had a bowel movement within 2 or 3 days after surgery. Patients may go several days after surgery before having a bowel movement. Do not be concerned unless your abdomen is feeling firm and bloated or you have related discomfort.

You may also purchase Colace over-the-counter and take it as directed. Stool softeners are more gentle than laxatives and should be tried first. Fiber additives should be avoided after surgery as they expand in your stomach, creating discomfort. Increasing your activity and fluid intake will also help move stool through your intestine and bowels.

## Diarrhea

When bowel function returns it's common to experience some diarrhea. Take your temperature and if you have a fever greater than 100.4° F (38.0 °C) or you have severe abdominal cramping, call your surgeon's office and leave a detailed message, including your temperature, how long you have been having diarrhea and the number of times. If you do not have a fever, you may try over-the-counter medicines (Imodium or Kaopectate). Take them only as directed.

## Gas/Bloating/Flatulence

It is common to feel abdominal bloating after surgery. Walking may help relieve gas pain or you may take Beano and Simethicone (Gas-X, etc.) as directed for these symptoms.

## Nausea and Vomiting

If you experience persistent nausea and/or vomiting, you are likely dehydrated. Start taking small, frequent sips of fluids to increase your fluid intake right away. If these symptoms last longer than 4 hours or you are unable to hold down clear liquids, contact your bariatric surgeon. Your surgeon will want a detailed report, including your temperature and what your intake has been, with amounts.

Take prescribed anti-nausea medications, as directed.

## Mild Pain or Headache

You may take over-the-counter acetaminophen (Tylenol) as directed. **Do not take non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (NSAIDs) as they can cause ulcers and lead to severe bleeding.** Common NSAIDs include aspirin, ibuprofen (Motrin, Advil) and naproxen (Aleve). Talk to your bariatric surgeon if you have other questions.

## Cold or Cough

If you have a cold or cough in the first 6 weeks after your surgery, take your temperature and contact your bariatric surgeon. If you're past 6 weeks post-op and have cold or cough symptoms, consult with a pharmacist to choose the proper medication for your symptoms. Be sure to explain that you cannot take NSAIDs due to your surgery.

## Menstrual Cramping

If you have severe cramping, consult your gynecologist. For cramping that is not severe, you may take Tylenol as directed and/or use a heating pad for relief.

## Difficulty Swallowing or Food Intolerance

If you have difficulty swallowing or eating, contact your surgeon. For continued problems call the Mount Carmel bariatric dietitian at 614-663-6353.

## Building New Habits to Avoid Mindless Eating

- Use small plates and baby or cocktail utensils.
- Use online grocery shopping services to avoid buying "impulse" items.
- Meal prep using small 4 oz. (1/2 cup) containers.

- Buy a coffee cup warmer to keep small meals warm over 20-30 minutes.
- Clean up after meals. Do not leave food sitting out.
- Avoid distractions while eating, such as phones, computers, watching TV or reading.
- Have fresh vegetables cut up and ready to eat for a snack.
- If there is food left on your plate and you are physically satisfied, dispose of it or place in a napkin so that you are not tempted to graze.
- Eat only at the table. Put food on a plate and sit down.
- Do not keep food at your desk or in your office at work.
- Do not drink calories.
- Portion out food. Never eat out of an original container.
- Place yourself far from the food tables at parties so you do not graze.
- Ask servers not to bring appetizers, bread baskets and chip baskets at restaurants.
- Before eating, ask yourself if you are really hungry. Do not eat because you're bored, stressed, need comfort or are socializing.

## Weight Loss Plateaus

It's common to experience weight loss plateaus where your weight stays the same after surgery. They can last for a few weeks and are normal no matter how carefully you're following your bariatric diet. Plateaus often occur within the first month and at different times after surgery, but they will pass. Your weight can change up to 5 pounds simply because of a shift in body fluids. Pick a day and weigh yourself only once weekly.



It is normal to not be hungry after surgery, but your body needs nutrients to survive, thrive and lose weight. Your body may enter "starvation mode" if calories and meal intake are cut very low, causing the body to hold onto fuel (fat). If you have cut calories and are not losing weight, contact the bariatric team for a nutrition assessment.

## Pregnancy After Bariatric Surgery

It's possible to have a safe and healthy pregnancy after bariatric surgery. However, it's best to avoid pregnancy for at least 2 years after surgery and until your weight is stable. Rapid or persistent weight loss might deprive a growing baby of important nutrients, leading to low birth weight and problems. Contact your gynecologist or family doctor to discuss birth control options if you are not currently protected.

If you've had weight-loss surgery and are considering pregnancy, talk with your bariatric surgeon and dietitian. Depending on your specific needs, you may need certain nutritional supplements. Your dietitian can also guide you on nutrition and weight gain during pregnancy.

## Hair Loss After Bariatric Surgery

Bariatric surgery can result in rapid weight loss, which can place the body under physical stress. Most people notice changes in their hair after bariatric surgery, from a dull and lifeless appearance to actual hair loss. Because the body does not get the nutrients it needs through diet alone, it sends hair into a resting phase to save nutrients for vital organs. Any hair loss is usually temporary. Protein supplements, snacks and shakes may help reduce hair loss after surgery, but almost everyone experiences some hair loss.

Try these tips to help manage hair loss:

- Make sure to maintain your protein intake at 65 to 75 grams each day.
- Only shampoo your hair when needed. For most people, that's every other day.
- Use a hydrating shampoo and conditioner.
- Avoid harsh chemical services such as color, perms and relaxers.
- Use a thermal styling spray to protect the hair from heat damage and cut back on thermal styling.
- Get a good haircut. Removing several inches can make your hair appear thicker and healthier.
- Collagen supplements and products can be used but they can't be counted toward your protein goals as they are an "incomplete protein."

## Plastic Surgery

Plastic surgery (body contouring surgery) is an option after bariatric surgery. Before this type of surgery can be done, weight loss needs to have stabilized and it needs to have been at least 1 year since your bariatric procedure. Health plans may or may not cover plastic surgery, so be sure to check with your insurance company. Types of surgery may include a facelift, breast lift, tummy tuck, lower body lifts, thigh lift and brachioplasty (arm lift). Talk to your bariatric surgeon for plastic surgeon recommendations.

# Physical Activity: Committing to Daily Exercise



The key to weight loss is using more calories than you take in. Being active has many health benefits that go beyond weight loss.

## Walking

Walking is an excellent way to start an exercise program and the only exercise you can do until cleared by your surgeon.

- ▶ Start a walking program before surgery and resume it once you're home from the hospital.

- ▶ A walking program is something you can follow year round. Walk outside during good weather and move indoors to a gym or mall on cold or rainy days.
- ▶ Start by walking on a flat surface and gradually add hills or slopes as you get stronger.
- ▶ If you can, invest in a good pair of walking shoes.
- ▶ Take a bottle of water with you on longer walks. Sip on the water at intervals, especially if you walk outside on hot days.

## Aerobic Exercise

Check with your doctor before starting any exercise program.

- ▶ Try a recumbent bike or turn on some music and dance.
- ▶ Try different activities like swimming or water aerobics, especially if you have joint pain.
- ▶ If you want to try something new, take a class geared for beginners.

Find ways to increase your activity by changing how you do things in your daily life. Examples include:

- ▶ Taking the stairs instead of the elevator.
- ▶ Parking at the far end of the parking lot and walking to the office or store.
- ▶ Mowing the lawn and raking leaves.
- ▶ Getting up from your desk to deliver a message instead of using e-mail.
- ▶ Walking to do errands instead of driving.

## Strength Training

- ▶ **Check with your surgeon before starting a strength-training program.**
- ▶ Strength training may include the use of weight machines, “free” weights (hand-held weights), and/or resistance bands.
- ▶ When starting a strength-training program, it may be helpful to take a class or hire a personal trainer. The instructor or trainer will show you the correct way to use the equipment to avoid injuries.
- ▶ Always warm up for 10-15 minutes by walking or riding an exercise bike before you begin your strength training workout. This will raise your core body temperature and prepare your joints and muscles for the training.

## Goals and Motivation

Your goal is 60 minutes of exercise daily. Divide it however needed, such as doing six 10-minute sessions throughout the day.

Tips to help you maintain your exercise program:

- ▶ Begin your exercise program gradually and progress slowly over time.
- ▶ Vary your workouts to reduce boredom.
- ▶ Exercise with friends who will support you.
- ▶ Set specific, realistic goals.
- ▶ Keep your walking shoes or exercise clothes with you so you can exercise anytime and anywhere.
- ▶ No one's perfect! If you have a setback, don't give up. Look forward to tomorrow as another chance to meet your goal.



# Lifetime Bariatric Follow-up Care

Long-term follow-up care is the key to successful outcomes after bariatric surgery. Regular follow-ups will help you learn how to make the necessary lifestyle changes and sustain them for long-term success.

Many patients have health conditions that impact their recovery and success. As weight loss occurs, follow-up care allows for important dietary adjustments to meet your changing nutritional needs. These changes, such as to treat vitamin and mineral deficiencies, often need to be made without delay. Over time, adjustments to other medications may be made by your primary care or other providers.

Always check with your doctor before making changes to your diet, vitamins and medications. Regular visits with your bariatric team and other doctors allows them to work with you to meet your health goals.

When you enter this program, you sign an agreement to:

- Follow the program guidelines.
- Keep all required appointments.
- Behave in a cooperative manner.
- Disclose all related medical information.
- Avoid getting pregnant in the first 24 months after surgery.
- Walk daily.
- Take required vitamins, supplements and medications for life.
- Avoid NSAIDs for life.
- Follow dietary instructions for life.
- Remain in contact with the program.
- Follow up with your surgeon as required.

The Mount Carmel Bariatric Program is dedicated to providing you with the best care and education to help you achieve a healthier life. We ask that you fully commit to making the lifestyle changes needed for success.

You will need frequent appointments with your bariatric surgeon after your surgery. You will see the surgeon at the following times after surgery:

- 1 week
- 6 weeks
- 3 months
- 6 months
- 9 months
- 1 year
- 18 months
- 24 months

**After this time, you will see your bariatric surgeon each year and as needed.**

- **Call Central Ohio Surgical Associates to contact your bariatric surgeon if you have questions or concerns: 614-228-0768.**
- **Call your primary care physician to make an appointment to be seen 1 to 2 weeks after your surgery.**



## Support

You are encouraged to attend a support group before and after your surgery to help you through your bariatric journey. Seeking support in a safe and caring environment can help you find practical ideas and suggestions from people going through similar challenges. You can also look to our Mount Carmel Bariatric Program Facebook page and your bariatric team for support.

### **IMPORTANT NUMBERS TO KNOW:**

<b>Central Ohio Surgical Associates:</b>	<b>614-228-0768</b>
<b>Mount Carmel Bariatric Nurse Navigator:</b>	<b>614-663-5041</b>
<b>Mount Carmel Bariatric Dietitian:</b>	<b>614-663-6353</b>

If you're interested in attending a support group,  
call **614-234-LIFE (5433)** for details.





**Thank you for choosing Mount Carmel  
for your bariatric surgery.**

Be certain to have your questions or concerns  
addressed before you go home.

*We wish you well in your recovery.*



MOUNT CARMEL

August 2021