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## Other resources available in this series

- Eating after a sleeve gastrectomy
- Eating after gastric banding
- Controlling portions and meal planning
- Good sources of low fat protein following weight loss surgery
- Healthy recipes following weight loss surgery

# Eating after a gastric bypass

**NLOSS**  
**North London Obesity**  
**Surgery Service**

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**Follow the rules of healthy eating**

Once your new eating habits have become established it is important that you follow a healthy diet, which will help to maintain your weight loss in the long term.

- Your diet needs to be **low fat, low calorie** and **portion controlled**
- Although your smaller stomach will limit the amount of food that can be eaten, weight gain can still occur if high calorie foods are eaten frequently.
- Try to use low calorie sweeteners and low fat spreads.
- Limit the amount of sugar and fats eaten.
- Alcohol is best avoided as it is high in calories and stimulates your appetite. It will also be absorbed more quickly, so even a small amount of alcohol will have a significant effect.

**How much weight loss I lose?**

Listed below is a rough guide as to how much weight you can expect to lose after a bypass. You will lose most of the weight in the first year, after that the weight loss will slow down and eventually stops about 18months to 2 years.

Don't worry if your weight isn't following this pattern exactly, not everyone is the same. However you may want to discuss it with the dietitian or one of the medical team, if you are losing it faster or slower

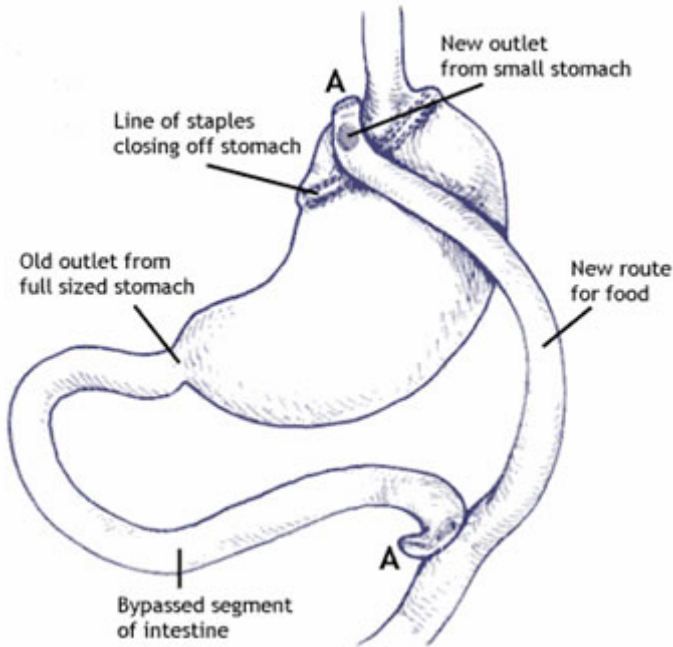
	Per Week	Per Month
First 3 months	1.5- 3kg	6-12kg
6-9 months	0.77- 1.5kg	3-6kg
9-1 year	0.77kg	3 kg

**What does a gastric bypass involve?**

During surgery, the top section of the stomach is divided off by a line of staples to create a small pouch. This is then connected directly to the end portion of the small intestine so that food bypasses your remaining stomach and most of the small intestine. The size of the stomach pouch and the length of the small intestine bypassed are carefully calculated to ensure that you will be able to eat enough for your body's needs when you reach normal weight.

**How does a gastric bypass work?**

Food can only be taken in limited quantities because the stomach pouch is so small. Food will remain in your stomach for longer because the hole between the stomach and intestine has been reduced. You will feel full more quickly and for longer, and therefore eat less. In addition, the bypass reduces the amount of nutrients and calories absorbed by the body.



**Introduction**

## Eating after a gastric bypass

The long-term success of your gastric bypass operation is dependent upon you following the dietary recommendations outlined in this booklet. You will need to eat a balanced diet to ensure your body gets all the nourishment it needs. Many people report that the first few months after surgery are difficult. This is not surprising as you are recovering from surgery as well as having to change your eating habits. We hope this leaflet will give you the guidance and information you require, to make those changes.

- **During the four weeks following the operation no solid foods should be eaten.**
- **Instead, you must have a liquid diet for two weeks followed by a soft moist diet for another two weeks. You can then start to add solid food.**

### *Why?*

Solid food can create pressure on your stitches and stretch your new stomach pouch. This may lead to vomiting and discomfort.

**Therefore, it is extremely important that you follow our guidelines.**

- |        |   |
|--------|---|
| STEP 1 | Liquid diet for two weeks   |
| STEP 2 | Soft moist diet for two weeks   |
| STEP 3 | Start to introduce solid foods and aim to follow a protein rich, low calorie healthy diet |

## Constipation

It is natural to expect some change in the frequency of your bowel habits; this is because the quantity of food you are now eating is considerably smaller than before the operation.

Initially you might find your bowels open less frequently, i.e. every two or three days, due to the change in your diet. However, by including some of the foods listed below your bowel movements should become more regular.

### **High fibre foods**

- Whole-wheat breakfast cereals e.g. All Bran, Shredded Wheat, Weetabix, Bran Flakes, porridge oats
- Pulses e.g. baked beans, kidney beans, lentils, chickpeas
- Whole-wheat crackers e.g. Ryvita, wholemeal crispbreads, Jacob's multigrain
- Fruit and vegetables e.g. cauliflower, broccoli, carrots, salad, green beans, peeled fruit, tinned fruit in juice

**It is also important to drink plenty of fluids between meals.  
Aim for eight to ten cups a day.**

If constipation persists, try taking liquid senna or lactulose, both available from your local pharmacy. If this does not help, talk to your GP or a member of the obesity team.

## Possible problems following a gastric bypass

## Dumping syndrome

Dumping syndrome describes a variety of symptoms that you may experience following your gastric bypass surgery. These symptoms include stomach cramps, nausea, vomiting, diarrhoea and feeling faint. Eating large quantities of sugary foods can cause your blood sugar level to become too high, because the sugar is very quickly absorbed into the bloodstream. This can result in the body producing large amounts of insulin, which causes your blood sugar levels to drop and has a range of unpleasant side effects.

### ***Dietary changes that will help***

- Limit sugary foods e.g. sweets, chocolates, biscuits and cakes.
- Limit sugary drinks e.g. sugar in hot drinks, full sugar squashes, fruit juices and sugary milkshakes
- Look out for alternative names for sugar e.g. glucose, sucrose, fructose, dextrose, honey or corn syrup.
- Use artificial sweeteners instead e.g. Canderel, Hermesetas, Splenda, Sweetex or supermarket own brands.
- Use low sugar drinks e.g. Kia Ora no added sugar, Robinsons no added sugar, Ribena no added sugar or supermarket own brands.
- Eat six small meals daily instead of three larger meals.
- Eat slowly.
- Avoid liquids for at least half an hour after a meal.
- Lie down if you experience these symptoms.

## Diarrhoea

You may find fat and fatty foods hard to digest after gastric bypass surgery and if eaten can cause diarrhea, so it is best to avoid them. Cutting these out will also help you to lose weight. If milk causes problems, try soya milk instead

## Step 1

### **Weeks 1 and 2 – A liquid diet**

To ensure an adequate intake of protein, calcium and other nutrients, the liquid diet must be based on **milk. Aim for at least two pints (1.2L) of milk or a milk alternative / day.** Your dietitian may also suggest taking milkshakes high in protein

### ***Other fluids allowed***

- Slimming drinks e.g. Slimfast or chemist/supermarket own brand
- Complan or Build-up shakes or soups
- Yogurt drinks and smoothies
- Still mineral water
- Still low-sugar squashes
- Clear low-calorie soups
- Smooth soups e.g. cream of tomato or chicken; or oxtail
- Tea and coffee without sugar
- Unsweetened pure fruit juice

Take things slowly over the first few days until you establish the amount of liquid that you can tolerate. Don't take anymore than 240ml / 8 oz in 1 hour. Sip fluids slowly and try not to gulp as this can hurt.

### ***Suggested meal plan***

<b>Breakfast</b>	1 glass of Build up/Complan/Slimfast shake
<b>Mid am</b>	1 glass of milk
<b>Lunch</b>	1 cup of soup (as above) 1 glass of liquid yogurt drink
<b>Mid pm</b>	1 glass of milk
<b>Evening</b>	1 glass of Build up/Complan/Slimfast soup 1 glass of Build up/Complan/Slimfast shake
<b>Late snack</b>	1 glass of milk

Take the milky drinks first to ensure you are getting enough nutrients, and then have other fluids after that as required.

## Tips

- Start with a couple of sips of fluid and slowly build up the quantity until a sensation of fullness occurs.
- It is important to stop drinking as soon as you feel full.
- If stomach pain or nausea is experienced while drinking, stop until the feeling passes.
- If the quantity of fluid taken is too large the stomach will overfill and vomiting will occur.
- DO NOT drink fizzy drinks at any time after a gastric bypass as the gases cause bloating and will increase your stomach size.

A gastric bypass not only reduces the quantity of food you are able to eat at any one meal, but also reduces the amount of food your body is able to absorb. This is called malabsorption.

In order to get all the vitamins and minerals your body needs, you will need to take daily vitamin and mineral supplements **for life**. To start with it should be in a liquid or chewable form, after a few months solid tablets can be taken.

**Don't take Calcium and iron supplements together – take them separately spread throughout the day!**

### Recommended Multivitamin and minerals:

- Chewable or liquid versions:
- **Bassett's Adult Chewable multivitamins with prebiotics & minerals** or **Sanatogen A-Z Chewable**
- **Feroglobin B12 tonic**
- **Wellkid Smart** or **Haliborange Chewable multivitamins**
- **Wellwoman Fizz** or **Berocca** (allow to go completely flat)
- **Sanatogen Gold** or **Centrum** (after 3 months)
- Plus
- **Chewable Calcium** – 1000mg calcium /day
- **Liquid iron or iron drops** - 50mg of iron/day

## Foods that may be difficult to introduce back into your diet

There are likely to be some foods that you may now have problems introducing back into your diet. The ability to tolerate various foods depends on how well you chew and how you cook and prepare the food. Try a food by eating a very small amount of it, if you can't tolerate it wait a month and then try it again.

Foods	Alternatives
<b>Fresh Bread</b>	Toast or crackers
<b>Pasta</b>	Serve in a generous sauce Use small shapes
<b>Rice</b>	Risotto
<b>Certain meats</b> e.g. steak, dry chicken, fried or roast meat, BBQ's	Small pieces/minced meat Marinade/slow cook/stew or casserole
<b>Fibrous vegetables</b> e.g. sweet corn, celery, raw vegetables, aubergine	Peel off skins Cook for a long time Cauliflower, broccoli, skinned tomato, beetroot
<b>Fruit</b> e.g. oranges, grapefruit	Peel fruit Puree or stew Tinned fruit in juice e.g. peaches, pears

### **Pay attention to your body's signals of fullness.**

- As soon as you feel full or you feel pressure in the centre of your abdomen stop eating or drinking.
- If you feel nauseous stop eating. One extra mouthful of food after these early signals could lead to pain, discomfort and vomiting.
- By the 3<sup>rd</sup> month, a typical meal should still only be ¼ cup size or 90g

### **If you do experience problems try to think back and identify the cause.**

- a) Have you eaten too fast or not chewed the food well enough?
- b) Have you eaten too much, taken fluids with the meal or taken fluids too soon before or after the meal?
- c) Have you eaten foods that are difficult to digest?
- Identifying the cause of your discomfort will help you make the necessary changes the next time you eat.
- Keeping a food diary may help.
- If you experience regular vomiting seek advice from a member of the obesity team or your GP.

## **Step 2**

### **Weeks 3 and 4 – A soft moist diet**

After two weeks, gradually start introducing foods with a soft moist texture. Foods should be broken into pieces or mashed with a fork. Some people prefer to blend or puree their foods. This is really up to you but not essential. To start with you can only manage a few mouthfuls at each meal but this will increase. To start with try things such as weetabix with milk or mashed potato with gravy. Remember to stick to small portions and it helps to eat from a side plate. Below are suitable foods, to take in small amounts (2-3 tablespoons). (You may need to blend or puree them).

	<b>Food suggestions</b>
<b>Cereals</b>	1 weetabix or 1 sachet of instant oats/Ready Brek with low fat milk
<b>Main courses</b>	Fish in white sauce Minced meat or chicken in tomato sauce Tender meat casseroles or stews Soft pulses with stock/sauce e.g. dhal Soft omelette/scrambled egg Macaroni cheese/cauliflower cheese Fish pie Cottage pie Lasagne/cannelloni
<b>Vegetables/ Potatoes</b>	Mashed potato/jacket potato without the skin Sweet potato Carrot, broccoli, cauliflower, courgette, swede mashed with a fork
<b>Fruit</b>	Stewed fruit Tinned fruit without syrup (not pineapple) Mashed banana
<b>Puddings</b>	Low calorie yoghurt/ mousse/ fromage frais Low calorie custard

### **Step 3**

#### **Week 5 onwards – A protein rich, low calorie diet**

It is now safe to gradually start experimenting with different textured solid foods. Although food may not need to be blended, it will still need to be tender and chewed well. You will need to chew each mouthful at least 20 times; until the food feels like a puree in your mouth. See suitable options in the table above.

It is really important to eat 3 meals a day, with suitable small snacks in between, even if you don't feel hungry. Take your time over your meal; it is likely that it will take about 30 minutes.

As a result of the gastric bypass surgery, less dietary protein is absorbed from your intestines so it is very important to make sure that you have enough protein in your diet every day. If you do not eat enough, your body will start breaking down your muscles for protein, leaving you feeling very weak. Protein foods are also very good at filling you up for longer.

#### ***Examples of good sources of protein***

Aim for 2 to 3 portions a day from a variety of foods.

<b>Dairy</b>	Skimmed or semi skimmed milk Add skimmed milk powder to milk & sauces Low calorie/diet yogurts, yogurt drinks Low sugar/low fat custard and milky puddings Low fat cheese & cottage cheese
<b>Eggs</b>	Scrambled, omelette, poached
<b>Pulses</b>	Lentils, beans (add them to stews & casseroles)
<b>Meat</b>	Minced meat in gravy or sauce Casserole meats
<b>Fish</b>	Canned oily fish e.g. tuna, sardines, pilchards Soft white fish – try it in sauce
<b>Protein shakes</b>	Build Up soup, Build Up/Complan shakes Slim fast shakes/smoothies/soups

### **Important things to remember following a gastric bypass**

#### **. Eat three meals a day**

- It is really important to establish regular meal patterns
- This means eating, breakfast, lunch and an evening meal and 2-3 small snacks a day.
- These are eaten not fewer than 3 hours apart and not more than 5 hours apart
- Don't be tempted to miss a meal. Missing meals, leads to snacking on crisps, biscuits and chocolates
- If done regularly the body doesn't get the good nutrition it needs
- Also the weight loss will stop because of the high calories eaten
- Although eating set meals and snacks may feel unusual to you, it is very important and gradually over time it will become more automatic and natural.

#### **Do not drink and eat at the same time**

- Drinking fluids with meals may overfill your small stomach, which will lead to vomiting.
- It can also stretch the stomach and "wash" food through too quickly. As a result you will not sense the early signs of fullness and may over eat.
- Avoid drinking at least 30 minutes before and after each meal.
- You will need to drink 6-8 drinks a day in between meals

#### **Chew food well and eat foods slowly.**

- Take your time over your meal; it is likely that it will take about 30 minutes.
- It takes this long to ensure you are chewing properly.
- If the food isn't chewed well you may block the outlet of your stomach, which will cause pain, discomfort, nausea and vomiting.
- Explain to others why you must eat slowly so they don't rush you.