

Important Guidelines to Eating Healthy

1. Choose Fresh Foods

It's important for the food you eat to be healthy and nutritious. Choose foods high in protein and rich in vitamins/minerals, such as lean poultry and fish, fresh fruits, and fresh or frozen vegetables.

2. Avoid High Fat and Sugary Foods

Needless snacking on poor quality, non-nutritious foods (i.e. potato chips, cookies, cakes, ice cream, etc.) is a major reason for failure to lose weight and weight regain.

3. Prepare Meals Before Eating

These are the steps to take to make sure your food is ready for you to eat:

- i. Use measuring cups, spoons, and/or a food scale to measure foods
- ii. Put foods on a small plate, such as a salad or dessert plate
- iii. Cut all foods into small, diced, pea-sized pieces
- iv. Use small toddler utensils to make it easier to take small bites

4. Keep Foods Moist

Dry foods can get stuck, leading to pain and regurgitation. Be sure to use low calorie (30 calories or less) condiments/dressings/sauces to moisten your foods. Some examples are salsa, light mayonnaise, light salad dressings, mustard, tomato sauce, fat-free gravy.

5. Eat Protein Foods First at Meals

Protein is important to prevent muscle and hair loss and slowing metabolism during weight loss. In order to consume enough protein to meet your body's needs you should consume protein at each meal in the form of a protein-rich food or a protein drink. You will be given a specific daily protein goal by the doctor, nurse practitioner and/or dietitian.

6. Eat Slowly and Chew Foods Thoroughly

Meals should last approximately 30 minutes. This can be achieved by following these steps:

- i. chew small bites thoroughly (15-20 chews per bite)
- ii. swallow each bite before taking another
- iii. put the fork or spoon down between bites

- iv. use a timer or stopwatch to keep track of your eating pace

7. Stop Eating Before You Feel Full

Once the stomach is nearly full, the brain receives a signal that enough food has been eaten. Take time to recognize the feeling of satiety (lack of hunger without feeling uncomfortably full). Eating too much food may cause nausea, vomiting, and/or pain, which could lead to damage to your stomach.

8. Drink Plenty of Hydrating Fluids

Aim to consume 64 or more ounces of fluids daily, unless otherwise directed by your doctor. Choose only very low or no calorie non-carbonated fluids, as drinking high calorie/sugary fluids can lead to weight gain and/or dumping and carbonated fluids can cause pain and stretching in the stomach. Ideal fluid choices include water, sugar-free flavored waters, and diet iced tea.

9. Sip Fluids Slowly

Drinking too quickly can cause reflux, discomfort and possible stretching of your stomach and/or esophagus. Immediately after surgery you should drink at a rate of 1 ounce every 20 minutes. Once you start phase 1 and from that point forward the proper “speed limit” for drinking is 1 ounce every 5 minutes, as tolerated.

10. Avoid Drinking While Eating and for 1 Hour After

Drinking with foods can cause them to flush too quickly through the stomach, causing you to eat larger portions and/or feel hungry sooner after meals. Alternatively, drinking with foods or too soon after can cause the stomach to overflow, resulting in pain, reflux and possible stretching of the stomach or esophagus. LAGB patients may drink right before meals, while LSG and RYGB patients should stop drinking 30 minutes prior to eating to allow the fluids to empty out of the stomach.

11. Avoid Stress or Distractions When Eating

Your stomach is a muscle and will react to stressful situations, causing tightness and possible difficulty eating. Distractions may cause you to forget your proper eating techniques, resulting in food intolerances. Meal times should be quiet, uninterrupted and stress-free. If this is not possible, adjust your meal times and/or use a protein shake instead as liquids are more easily tolerated.