Dietary Guidelines
After Bariatric Surgery

We can provide interpreters for a variety of languages, information in larger print or other formats (e.g. audio) - please call us on 01932 723553.
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Dietary Guidelines after Bariatric Surgery

This leaflet is designed for patients who have undergone bariatric surgery such as a gastric band insertion, a gastric bypass or sleeve gastrectomy. There is a separate booklet given out for those needing a gastric balloon.

After any bariatric surgery, you will be asked to follow a special diet in order to reduce the possibility of complications. Although it may be tempting to rush or skip stages, food is slowly re-introduced to reduce discomfort, the risk of vomiting but also to give your body time to heal. In the case of a gastric band, it is time to allow the band time to settle into position.

There are 4 stages to the food re-introduction. Except for the last stage, keep to each stage for 2 weeks.

The stages are:
- Fluids only
- Pureed foods
- Soft/Mashable foods
- Normal healthy eating

Nutrition is very important once you have had bariatric surgery. You need to ensure your diet contains sufficient nutrients, vitamins and minerals to live healthily and lose weight in a healthy manner.

The consequences of having a poor diet vary. In the short term poor nutrition may lead to dry or cracked skin or nails or hair loss. In the long term a poor diet may increase your risk of developing:
- Anaemia
- Osteoporosis affecting bone health
- Heart disease
- Cancer
- Diabetes
- Weight regain

Further Information

We endeavour to provide an excellent service at all times, but should you have any concerns please, in the first instance, raise these with the Matron, Senior Nurse or Manager on duty. If they cannot resolve your concern, please contact our Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS) on 01932 723553 or email pals@asph.nhs.uk. If you still remain concerned please contact our Complaints Manager on 01932 722612 or email complaints@asph.nhs.uk.

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A balanced diet will also ensure that the weight you lose is mainly fat. Many people, after surgery eat insufficient protein which results in them losing muscle mass instead of fat. Muscle helps you lose weight by boosting your metabolism as it uses up more energy than fat. (Metabolism is the way the body turns food into energy). It is therefore important during the first few weeks that you eat enough protein to reduce muscle loss.

As with any new food plan, there are a few guidelines:

- Chew foods very thoroughly
- Aim to chew each mouthful until food is a paste like consistency
- Slow down your speed of eating
- Expect to take 30 – 45 minutes to eat a meal
- Stop eating or drinking as soon as you feel full
- Choose foods of a high nutritional quality i.e. it contains vitamins and minerals as well as providing energy
- Eat small portions
- Do not eat and drink at the same time
- Continue to sip fluids through the day as you will no longer have the capacity to drink very fast or very much in one go
- Ensure you stick to a regular meal pattern, do not skip meals

Note:
Although there are many bariatric surgery recipe books available, please ensure that you stick to our staged food reintroduction guidelines as described in this leaflet to prevent the possibility of any complications.
Stage 1 – Fluid diet
You should expect to be on this stage of the diet for two weeks.

In hospital - Immediately after the operation
Whilst in hospital you will start the fluid stage of the post operative diet. You will be offered room temperature water for several hours after the operation. If you tolerate this, you will be able to progress onto normal fluids.

How much and when?
Bread in mind you now have a tiny ‘new’ stomach (smaller than an egg), so go slowly to prevent any complications such as stretching of your new stomach or risking problems like leaks or vomiting or making the band move (slippage).

• Stop drinking as soon as you feel full
• Take small sips – you need to drink slowly
• Aim for six to eight cups of fluid a day. This is equivalent to 2 litres (4 pints)
• Try to drink 100 to 200mls every 1 to 1½ hours
• You may find it useful to carry a bottle of low calorie fruit squash or other suitable fluid around with you; remember to take small and frequent sips.
• Aim for 1 pint of milk and 1 to 2 small cups of diluted fruit juice each day

Breads, Cereals, Starchy Foods (two to three portions per day)
• ½ cup (100g or 4 oz) cooked or soft cereal such as porridge
• 2 small melba toast /cream crackers
• 4 water crackers
• ½ slice well toasted thin bread
• ½ cup (100g or 4 oz) well cooked rice/pasta/noodles/couscous
• ½ cup (75g or 3 oz) mashed potato
• 1 egg-sized new potato
• 1/3 plantain/green banana cooked (boiled or steamed)
• ½ slice yam/cassava

Fats and Sugars (three to four maximum per day)
• 1 teaspoon of fat – spread or oil
• 1 dessert spoon cream
• 1 teaspoon sugar, fructose sugar or honey (unlimited artificial sweetener)

Your Dietitian is: ____________________
Telephone: 01932 722202

If you have your surgery at St. Georges, please contact the dietitians on 0208 725 1022
Below is information on the expected portion and number of portions expected for each food group of the Eatwell plate to maintain a healthy balanced diet.

Main Protein foods (two to three portions per day)
(foods marked with the * are both protein and dairy)
- 25g (1 oz) to 50g (2oz) cooked lean meat, fish, poultry or Quorn
- 1 - 2 eggs
- 50g (¼ cup) cottage cheese*
- 1/3 cup lentils/beans/legumes (without skin)

Dairy foods (two to three portions per day)
(foods marked with * are both protein and dairy)
- 1 cup skimmed milk*
- 1 small (125g pot) yoghurt *(preferably low fat)
- 1 match box portion (~30g) of hard cheese*
- ½ cup custard (low fat and sugar)*

Fruit and Vegetable Foods (three to five portions per day)
- ½ cup (80g/3oz) cooked fruit or vegetables
- ½ cup soft fruit such as pear / tinned peaches (in natural juice not syrup)/ stewed fruit
- ½ cup (125ml ) fruit or vegetable juice

Drink these liquids:

It is harder to meet your body’s requirements when you are only consuming liquids. It is therefore important to ensure, that the liquids you do have, provide the nutrients your body needs.

The following liquids are suitable:
- Milk (semi-skimmed, skimmed or 1%)
- Milk shake (not too sweet)
- Soup with blended protein such as chicken/fish/meat/pulses
  If thick, please dilute with milk until a liquid consistency. Or add 2 tablespoons of dried milk powder. Please sieve to ensure all lumps are removed
- Build-up or Complan soup and drinks (no lumps or bits)
- Ovaltine/Horlicks made with semi-skimmed milk
- Slimfast
- Thin yoghurt with no bits (Low fat or diet varieties only)
- Thin custard

The following fluids are fine between meals BUT please do not fill up on these at the expense of the nutritious fluids above

- Tea or coffee (sweetener only if needed)
- Stock cubes, Marmite or Bovril
- Fruit juice (½ fruit juice, ½ water)
- Fruit squash (sugar free/low calorie varieties only)
- Water or flavoured water (sugar-free varieties)

Avoid these liquids:
- Fizzy or sparkling drinks (these will make you feel bloated and uncomfortable)
- Alcohol (this can irritate the stomach and also provides empty calories)
- Any liquid with bits or lumps
- Fluids with excess sugar and fats may make you feel sick, if so avoid these drinks
Please aim for an intake as below for Stage 1 (liquids):

**Breakfast:**
- 1 small glass of Slimfast or Nestle Build-up drink

**Mid morning:**
- 1 small glass of milk

**Lunch:**
- Soup (150 – 200ml) – Please ensure these are protein rich but blended until completely smooth and sieved
- ½ small cup of thin yoghurt

**Mid afternoon:**
- 1 small glass of milk

**Evening meal:**
- Soup or Complan (savoury) or Slimfast or other meal replacement product or soup as above
- ½ pot yoghurt

**Supper:**
- 1 small cup of chocolate or Ovaltine (made with milk) or a small glass of milk

Your dietitian can provide you with further suggestions and help with planning your fluid intake.

**When can I move on to Stage 2?**
You should be able to move onto stage 2 after 2 weeks of the liquid diet. Please do not progress any quicker than this even if you feel well as this could potentially jeopardise your surgery. If you have any concerns about this, please contact your dietitian or bariatric nurse.

**Any questions?**
If you have any questions or worries, please ring your dietitian.

**Evening Meal suggestions: Ensure all evening meals have a protein portion included:**
- Jacket potato (1/3 inside flesh only) with beans (1/2 cup) or tuna or grated cheese (low fat)
- Chilli with extra vegetables (½ cup cooked) with rice (½ cup cooked)
- Spaghetti or couscous (½ cup cooked) with minced beef and bolognaise sauce (ensure extra vegetables are added)
- Risotto (½ cup) with minced chicken (½ cup) and ½ cup mixed vegetables (no skin)
- Shepherd’s or Cottage pie (½ cup) with ½ cup vegetables
- Tuna Mornay (½ cup) with macaroni (½ cup cooked)
- Chickpeas (½ cup) and Mediterranean vegetables (½ cup) with no hard skin (you can use tinned, peeled tomato instead of fresh. Add a small amount of feta cheese for extra protein)
- Lentil soup (½ cup) with 2 Melba toast or crackers
- Dahl (½ cup) with one slice of toasted bread or ½ toasted pita or crisp bread
- One slice roasted meat with gravy, one new potato, 1/3 small sweet potato roasted or boiled
- Stir-fried vegetables (½ cup) with noodles (½ cup) plus minced beef (teriyaki)
- Chicken Cassolet (½ breast) with mashed potato and broccoli
- Salmon (½ fillet) with 1 new potato and vegetables
**Constipation**
This can often occur after bariatric surgery. During the initial stages, you are having much less to eat than normal and also less fibre in your diet. Symptoms include: hard stools, feeling full and potentially nausea. Please ensure that you drink plenty of fluids or you can take stool softeners such as Senokot or Fybogel.

**Sample meal plan for Stage 4 (Healthy Eating)**

- **Breakfast suggestions**
  - Porridge/Weetabix (1)/Shreddies or Shredded Wheat (1) with ½ cup with skimmed milk
  - One small pot of yoghurt (diet, fruit flavour) & ½ portion of fruit such as soft fruit
  - Soft boiled egg or omelette with ham or low fat cheese portion and 1 slice dried toast (if tolerated)

- **Lunch Suggestions**
  - Scrambled/poached egg with thin toast (if tolerated) or melba toast
  - 2 Ryvitas/crispbreads with wafer thin ham/chicken/turkey slices & a small salad
  - 1 very small jacket potato (no skin) with baked beans
  - Chicken soup with 1 – 2 melba toast or crispbread
  - 4 Water crackers with low fat cheese & salad

One kiwi fruit or ½ small banana plus one small pot of diet yoghurt or drink of milk

- **Evening meal**
  - Meal suggestion as below with one small diet yoghurt or ½ fruit portion plus custard (1/2 cup)
  - Don’t forget to take fluid between meals.

**Stage 2 – Pureed diet**
You should expect to be on this stage of the diet for two weeks. During this stage you will need to puree **ALL** food and meals. You can do this by using a blender or a food processor. Please DO NOT use baby food products.

Aim to have foods that are the consistency of smooth thick porridge. For example:

- Any vegetable without skin/pith can be pureed or blended (such as carrots, parsnips, sprouts, cabbage, turnip)
- Pureed mash potato or sweet potato or yam or creamed rice are good sources of starch
- Protein-rich foods such as cottage cheese, chicken, lamb, beef, turkey, Quorn, soya (with gravy/sauce) or fish **all must be pureed until smooth**
- Yoghurt (set/liquidized but no bits) or custard are good snack foods as they also offer some protein
- Pureed fruit/mashed banana (stewed or canned in natural juice may be easier to puree)
- Plain crackers dipped in milk/liquid to make them soft
- Continue to drink 1pt milk and a glass of diluted fruit juice (½ juices, ½ water).

**Foods to avoid:**

- All solid foods
- Tough skin on food (such as tomato, sausage)
- Sweet corn
- Foods with seeds
- Bacon and meat with ‘gristle’ and meat that has not been pureed
- Hard cheese
- Potato skins
- Toast, bread
Beware of high intakes of legumes/pulses (such as chickpeas/dhal/lentils/split peas) as they absorb lots of fluid in the bowel which can cause discomfort at this stage.

You will find that your tolerance for food may be different to another patient’s tolerance. Therefore some trial and error will be needed to work out which foods cause minimum discomfort.

**Tips:**
- Use a blender or liquidizer to puree your food
- Chew foods well, even though they are already pureed
- Eat food very slowly, set aside 30 to 45 minutes for meals
- Ensure you have the protein part of your meal first
- Consume food and fluids separately
- Do not drink for 30 minutes before or after your meal
- Initially expect to only manage 1 – 2 tablespoons but this should increase as time passes
- Ensure you have a good variety of high protein foods such as milk, yoghurt, pureed meat/poultry/pulses/fish
- Aim for a total of 1pint of milk daily

**Sample Menu for Stage 2 (Pureed)**

**Breakfast:** 28 to 56g (1 to 2ozs) soft/mushy Weetabix/porridge/powdered rice with milk

**Mid-morning:** ½ cup of pureed fruit or ½ cup milk

**Lunch:** 56g (2oz) of soup with blended meat/fish

**Mid-afternoon:** ½ pot of yoghurt

**Dinner:** 28g (1oz) minced beef (pureed) in gravy with 28g (1oz) pureed mashed potato and 28g (1oz) pureed vegetables

**Supper:** 28g (1oz) pureed fruit with ½ pot yoghurt

**In addition:** Sip 1 cup, 230ml (8floz) of liquid between each meal/snack

In addition to a general multi vitamin and mineral supplement, bypass patients may also have to other supplements, depending upon their blood test results. When indicated, these will be discussed.

If it is 18 months or longer since your surgery and you want to become pregnant, please choose a specific pregnancy supplement such as Pregnacare as most supplements contain too much vitamin A.

**Eating Out**
- Ideally order a starter as you main meal as this should be the correct quantity
- Ask if you are able to order a small main course, as some restaurants can do this but may not advertise it
- Ask about ingredients/ways of cooking as common problems can be caused by cooking in a way which does not make chewing easy or could cause potential problems
- Try to choose healthier meal options, but remember to ask for salad dressings on the side
- Don’t forget the main guidelines – volume, speed, correct texture of food and most importantly chewing your food
- Keep alcohol to a moderate amount or have non fizzy drinks

**Points to remember:**
- Ensure you have sufficient time to eat, allow 30 - 45 mins
- You may find certain foods cause problems
- Take 1500 – 2000ml (3 – 4pts) of fluid per day. Using a 500ml bottle may help you to record your intake
- If you vomit or feel sick consider the following (as this is NOT expected or normal)
  - Volume – did you eat too much
  - Eating Speed – did you eat too quickly
  - Type of food – is the food chewable
**Alcohol**

When trying to lose weight, remember alcohol contains calories, with few other nutrients and will be fully absorbed. It is important to limit your alcohol intake to help with weight loss but is particularly advisable for people after bariatric surgery as you will find it affects you more quickly. It is also an appetite stimulant, which may lead you to eat more and choose inappropriate foods.

The current Government recommendations for alcohol consumption are:
- 21 units a week for men (3 – 4 units/day max)
- 14 units a week for women (1 – 2 units/day max)
- Have 1 – 2 alcohol free days and avoid binge drinking

1 unit = Half pint of beer or 1 pub optic measure of spirits
2 units = 1 small glass of wine (175ml)

**Remember**
- Use diet /low calorie non fizzy mixers
- If you are taking any medication, consult your doctor before drinking alcohol

**Vitamin and Mineral supplements:**
Supplements are useful for people who are not getting enough nutrients from their food. After bariatric surgery, your intake dramatically reduces, therefore limiting you ability to meet all your nutritional requirements. In addition, longer term problems with tolerating specific foods may also lead to nutritional deficiencies or the likelihood of developing these. As such we generally recommend a multi A – Z vitamin and mineral supplement tablet.

However, with the bypass, it is essential to take a multivitamin and mineral supplement each day for the rest of your life.

Potential supplements include:
- Santogen Gold A - Z or Centrum Complete or Forceval

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**Stage 3 – Soft Mashable diet**

You should expect to be on this stage of the diet for two weeks (usually from weeks 5 to 6 after surgery)

**Important information about Stage 3**
You must eat very slowly; allowing 30 to 45 minutes to eat your meal. It is important that you stop eating as soon as you feel full so you don’t stretch your stomach pouch.

Eating too much and eating too quickly will cause pain and possibly vomiting.

**Foods to have:**
You can start to introduce more foods and different textures to your diet at this stage. However, choose nutritious foods to provide the nutrients your body needs.

Most of your food should still have a soft or mashed texture. Suitable foods are:
- Weetabix, porridge or Ready Brek – all soaked until mushy
- Mashed potato, sweet potato or yam
- Soft cooked pasta with a sauce (preferably tomato) or well cooked rice (these may be difficult with the gastric band, if they cause vomiting or a blockage, please do not continue to eat)
- Mashed vegetables (such as carrots, parsnips)
- Minced chicken or meat or flaked fish with a sauce/gravy
- Scrambled egg or soft omelette
- Cottage cheese, low fat cream cheese or grated reduced fat cheese
- Pulses such as mashed baked beans, chick peas, kidney beans
- Soft fruit or tinned fruit in natural juice
- Yoghurt (low fat or diet versions)
- Custard
- One to two breadsticks, crisp breads, crackers
Foods to avoid

- Any food with a tough skin or pith such as sausages, tomato, apple, plums, oranges or bacon.
- Stringy or fibrous vegetables such as celery, asparagus, or sweet corn, green beans, mushrooms etc.
- Fizzy drinks - these will make you feel bloated and uncomfortable. If you do not like plain water you can let fizzy drinks (diet versions) go flat and then drink them.
- Alcohol can irritate the stomach and is high in calories.

Amounts and timings of meals

- Aim to have three small meals a day with one of the suggested snacks if you feel hungry between meals.
- Your portion sizes may increase slightly, but you should continue to stop eating as soon as you feel full. If you eat too quickly or too much it will be painful and may make you vomit.
- Serve your meals on a small side plate or child’s plate and eat very slowly. It should take you about 30 to 45 minutes to consume a meal.
- You need to aim for six to eight cups of fluid a day. This is equivalent to 2 litres (4 pints).
- It is important that you do not eat and drink at the same time. Fluids will dilute the food in the pouch and allow it to pass through too quickly, so try not to drink for 30 minutes before or after eating.
- Remember to chew your foods thoroughly to a paste like consistency.

Sugar

It has very little benefit for the body other than providing calories. We call these empty calories as sugar has no other vitamin and minerals. It can be found in many foods or drinks.

Aim to reduce the amount of sugar in your diet, no matter which bariatric surgery you have.

Practical tips:

- Avoid sugar in drinks, use artificial sweetener instead
- Choose diet / light / no added sugar versions of squash
- Choose unsweetened fruit juice
- Cut down on biscuits, chocolate and cake consumption
- Use low sugar / low calories / diet / healthy options where possible, including breakfast cereals, yoghurts, puddings
- Spread jam, marmalade, honey and syrup thinly on bread, or try the reduced sugar versions

Fluids

Fluids are essential for health. If you do not drink enough you may suffer from dehydration. This can:

- Cause problems with constipation
- Affect concentration
- Make you feel tired and stop your body from working normally

Aim for 1500 – 2000ml (~3 – 4pts) per day. Try to ensure these are taken evenly through the day between meals. Please do not take with meals as they may make you feel full.

Some people find drinking water difficult. If this is the case, try alternatives such as:

- Flat diet drinks
- Diluted fruit juice
- Milk
- No sugar squash
Unsaturated fat refers to either poly-unsaturated or mono-unsaturated fat and can help reduce blood cholesterol. These are preferred to saturated fats. The table below shows some examples of unsaturated fats:

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<th>Unsaturated fats</th>
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<tr>
<td>Poly-unsaturated</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sunflower, corn, linseed, safflower and soya oils</td>
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<tr>
<td>Vegetable margarine</td>
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<tr>
<td>Oily fish</td>
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However, remember that all fats, oils and food made from these, are still high in energy (calories), therefore, try to reduce the total amount used to help with weight loss. Here are some ideas:

- Boil, steam, poach or casserole - rather than frying / roasting with oil
- Try a low fat unsaturated margarine and spread thinly
- Cut off the visible fat around meat and avoid eating the skin of chicken
- Limit the amount of pies, pastries, pasties, croissants, garlic and naan bread etc
- Try low fat / fat free versions of foods, e.g. low fat cheese, mayonnaise, salad dressing
- Eat less crisps and chips
- Eat less processed meat, as this is higher in fat, e.g. sausages, corned beef, pâté

Many fatty foods are of a consistency which is easy to eat with a gastric band or a sleeve gastrectomy and therefore weight loss will be limited if these are not reduced significantly. With any bariatric surgery these foods should still be restricted to get greater weight loss.

Sample Menu for Stage 3 (Soft/Mashable)

- **On getting up**: Cup of tea or coffee (milk and sweeteners allowed) or glass of fruit juice

- **Breakfast Suggestions**:
  - One Weetabix/plain instant oats with semi-skimmed milk
  - Yoghurt & soft fruit or mashed banana

- **Lunch suggestions**:
  - Cheese omelette made with one - two eggs and reduced fat grated cheese with 1 – 2 Melba toast.
  - Soup with Dahl/lentils/chickpeas or very soft meat/fish and 1 – 2 melba toast
  - Scrambled egg on crip bread

- **Evening meal suggestions**:
  - Minced meat in a tomato sauce with well cooked pasta or rice or mash potato with mashed vegetables
  - Fish in sauce with mash & mashed carrots and swede
  - V. small jacket potato (no skins) with mashed beans
  - Low fat shepherds pie or cottage pie with mashed vegetables

- **Suggested snacks**:
  - Each of the following represents one snack:
    - Glass of semi-skimmed milk or glass of fruit smoothie made with pureed fruit and low fat yoghurt
    - One small low fat or diet yoghurt
    - Fruit – tinned in natural juice, stewed or soft fruit.

- **In addition**: You can drink tea, coffee, water, low calorie fruit squashes but limit juice to 1 glass per day

Your dietitian can provide you with further suggestions and help with meal planning if needed.
Stage 4 – Healthy Eating

Once you have moved back onto normal consistency foods, it is important to follow healthy eating guidelines for long term health. You should now be 6 – 8 weeks after your surgery. Only start this stage if you have tolerated stage 3 for two weeks and have had no problems.

It is essential for everyone to have a well balanced diet but especially so for people who have had bariatric surgery and are trying to lose or maintain weight loss. You still need to ensure your body is getting enough nutrients, vitamin and minerals and importantly protein to maintain your health in the long term. Some solid foods may be easily tolerated or easy to eat, however these are often high in fat and sugar and low in vital nutrients such as vitamins and minerals and protein. These foods are not recommended to be a significant part of your long term diet.

The consequences of a poor diet over many years can be a contributory factor to many long term diseases such as:

- Diabetes
- Heart Disease
- Osteoporosis (fragile bones)
- Anaemia
- Cancer
- Weight gain

In addition, it is important that the correct foods are eaten to ensure that you lose weight as fat rather than muscle. It is important to preserve muscle as it uses more energy than fat, so by losing more muscle than expected, it may reduce your metabolism. By sticking to a healthy well balanced diet after surgery, you will be helping to ensure your weight loss is more likely to be fat.

Fat and Sugar

Fats are needed by our body for many things such as regulation and production of hormones, cushioning and insulation so should not be cut out completely. However, most people in the UK eat more than needed thereby contributing to excess weight. Try to reduce the total fat in your diet.

There are two main groups of fat - saturated and unsaturated.

**Saturated fats** can raise your blood cholesterol and increase the risk of heart problems. These are primarily found in animal based products or processed foods. Examples include:

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>cream cheese, full fat milk, cream</th>
<th>biscuits/cakes/chocolate</th>
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<tr>
<td>visible fat on meat, skin on chicken</td>
<td>pies/pastries/processed meats</td>
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<tr>
<td>Butter</td>
<td>puddings such as cheesecakes, trifles</td>
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<td>Crisps</td>
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- Difficult fruit/vegetables may include
  - Oranges, tomatoes, apples
  - Jacket potato skins
  - Sweetcorn, peas or beans
- For difficult fruit and vegetables, investigate different ways of cooking or preparing them to see if this makes a difference rather than not eating any
- Many people think drinking fruit juice or smoothies as a way to get their 5 a day. However, these are high in sugar and calories and therefore should be restricted to 160ml per day. Try to dilute with water and avoid having at meal times.
**Breads, cereals and Starchy foods**
These are important sources of fibre, vitamins and minerals and energy. The energy from these foods are the preferred ‘fuel’ of many organs including the brain and heart but even red blood cells which help transport oxygen around the body. They also control your blood sugar which is especially important for people with diabetes but also affects concentration and hunger. It is therefore important to include these at every main meal.

However tolerance to bread, rice and pasta in particular can vary considerably after bariatric surgery, with some people not being able to tolerate them. They have to be well cooked and chewed extremely well. If undercooked they may continue to swell and this can cause stomach discomfort.

**Dairy**
These are good sources of protein and are recommended for their Calcium to help ensure that your bones remain healthy. Try to choose low fat or diet versions and aim for a minimum 3 servings a day. A serving is: 28g low fat cheese or 125g diet yoghurt or 200ml milk such as 1%, semi skimmed or skimmed milk. With the bypass you are likely to need extra Calcium supplements each day.

**Fruit and Vegetables**
These contain many beneficial ingredients for health. These include being low in fat, high in fibre and water but also contain other substances such as Vitamin C, potassium and antioxidants. These are used for wound healing, keeping skin and teeth healthy but also for many other processes within the body. By including these, you reduce the risk of developing nutritional deficiencies. They are also useful to help prevent constipation which can be common after bariatric surgery.

- Aim for 3 – 5 servings per day
- Some fruit will need peeling. Fruit skins can be difficult to breakdown and some may cause a feeling of blocking of

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**What is a Balanced diet?**
A balanced diet includes all the vitamins, minerals and nutrients to ensure good health. This means eating a wide variety of food. The Eatwell plate (below) is designed to provide an idea of the types of foods you should include as part of a healthy eating lifestyle. It separates foods into 5 groups and gives an idea of the proportions of the foods expected in a day. The five food groups are:

- Starchy Foods including bread and cereals
- Fruit and Vegetables
- Meat, Fish and Alternate Protein foods
- Dairy Products
- Sugary and fatty foods

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**The Eatwell Plate**

![The Eatwell Plate](image_url)
Meat, Fish and Alternatives (Protein)

These foods are important for many reasons but especially for growth and repair. Protein is particularly important after the Gastric Bypass and Sleeve Gastrectomy as you have greater wounds to heal than band patients. Protein is used by every cell in your body and therefore can affect immune functioning, wound healing and hair and skin health. Protein rich foods also contain many other essential vitamins and minerals such as iron, zinc and magnesium.

Ideally you should aim to have 2 – 3 small portions each day. Eat the protein part of the meal first, in case you feel full.

Meat
Try to have as wide variety as possible. However, red meat can be very coarse in texture and therefore difficult to chew after surgery. These can potentially cause problems for anyone with bariatric surgery but especially for people with the gastric band or bypass.

Ways to help improve tolerance of meat
- Ensure you chew any meat thoroughly
- Mince or grind meat such as chicken, beef or lamb. Ensure that this is as lean as possible as lumps of gristle may not be chewable and can cause problems
- Casseroling/poaching and steaming meat will keep the meat moist, thereby making it easier to chew
- Finely cut as in ham or turkey slices

Fish
Is an excellent source of protein and is often well tolerated. Oily fish such as salmon, trout, pilchards and mackerel are also good sources of omega 3 fish oils which have been shown to have heart protective qualities. Aim to have fish once or twice a week, preferably one portion being oily fish.

Eggs
Are very good sources of protein, rich in iron, but also other vitamin and minerals such as Vitamin D. They can be cooked in many ways including poaching, scrambling or in omelettes. However some people do report problems, especially if the egg has been over cooked, for instance a hard boiled egg or over scrambled egg. If this is the case, look at changing the cooking method.

Vegetarian sources
Beans, lentils and other pulses are also good sources of protein, high in iron and calcium and low in fat but high in fibre. Some people find that the skins can sometimes cause problems. If this is the case, try them pureed or skinless. Quorn, tofu and soya are often used by vegetarians for protein. These are often well tolerated and provide extra options at meal times.

Other sources of protein are milk and yoghurts, although they are generally classified under dairy. Try to use low fat or diet versions. In addition these are good sources of Calcium and other vitamin and minerals.