

## Diet Related Problems After Surgery

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### Nausea and Vomiting

After surgery, it is common to have an upset stomach or nausea. This can be caused by:

- the surgery
- eating too much
- eating too fast
- odors
- pain medication

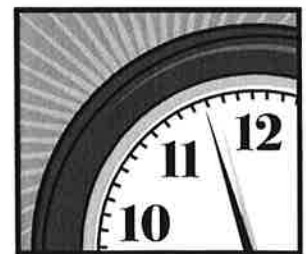
Nausea caused by the surgery can last a few days to a few weeks. This should go away over time. If you think the problem may be caused by pain medications, contact your doctor for a change in medication.

Nausea can also happen when you eat too much. Eating too much will put pressure on the surgical area.

Pressure and distention may also cause vomiting. Too much vomiting can cause dehydration and a change in the nutrients in your body. It may also cause problems with your incision healing. This is not healthy.

You can prevent vomiting by:

- eating slowly
- eating small amounts
- chewing well
- not laying down after eating
- not drinking fluids for 30 minutes before or after meals
- not drinking with meals



You can usually eat again shortly after vomiting.

**If you have persistent nausea and vomiting or if you are concerned, contact the Bariatric Clinic or go to Emergency.**



## Dehydration

Dehydration means that you do not have enough water in your body to function well. People with severe dehydration are admitted to the hospital and given fluids through their veins.

### Symptoms of dehydration are:

- dark urine
- nausea
- feeling tired all of the time
- lower back pain
- making less urine
- dry mouth and tongue
- feeling dizzy
- feeling irritable

### You can prevent dehydration by:

- Drinking at least 2 litres (8 cups) of fluid a day.
- Sip fluids all day long. Buy a sports bottle and keep on filling it and drinking.
- Sucking on ice chips or sugar-free popsicles if you have nausea.



## Dumping Syndrome

This happens when the new, smaller stomach pouch empties into the bowel too fast. It is caused by:

- eating large portions
- eating or drinking too much fat
- eating or drinking too much sugar
- drinking with your meal

### Symptoms of Dumping Syndrome are:

- abdominal pain
- nausea
- cramping
- diarrhea
- shakes or chills
- sweating
- feeling faint
- increased heart rate
- bloating

### To prevent Dumping Syndrome:

- Eat protein at each meal.
- Avoid eating large portions.
- Avoid foods and drinks that are high in sugar and fat.
- Avoid drinking with a meal and 30 minutes before and after a meal.

## Constipation

Your stool may be soft at first as you are not eating solid food. Some people have stool that is hard to pass. This is called constipation.



Constipation may be caused by:

- eating less fibre because you are eating less food
- not drinking enough fluids during the day
- pain control medications such as Tylenol #3
- medications and supplements such as iron and calcium

It is normal to have from 1 bowel movement every 3 days to 3 bowel movements of soft stool daily.

**To help your bowels stay soft and move, your fluid intake needs to be at least 2.0 litres (8 cups) a day and you need to have regular physical activity.**

If you have not had a soft bowel movement after 2 days start adding 120 ml (1/2 cup) of prune juice to your meal plan. After having the prune juice, drink warm water, decaffeinated coffee or tea. You can do this 1 to 2 times a day to help. Remember that prune juice adds extra calories to your diet plan so be sure to count this and avoid other types of juice if drinking prune juice.

If you still have constipation or pain when you have a bowel movement your dietitian may want you to add a 100% inulin fibre supplement such as Benefibre, Metamucil Simply Clear or equivalent generic product. Start by adding a small amount in your diet such as 5 ml (1 teaspoon) daily and increase slowly 5 to 10 ml (1 to 2 teaspoons) 1 to 2 times a day until your stool is soft and your bowels move every 1 to 3 days. Increasing too fast will cause an increase in gas and can cause problems and pain.

You should not use a fibre supplement such as Benefibre if you are not drinking 2 litres (8 cups) of fluid a day. This amount of water is needed to make the fibre supplement work. If you cannot drink 2 litres of fluid a day and take a fibre supplement you may become more constipated.

If you have not had a bowel movement after 3 to 4 days you can talk to your pharmacist about adding a product such as colace, senokot or milk of magnesia. Your pharmacist can counsel you on the dose to start with and how to take this type of product.

**If you do not have a soft bowel movement for 4 or more days, contact the Bariatric Clinic.**



## Diarrhea

Some people have soft or liquid stool called diarrhea for a few months after surgery. This can happen as your body gets used to the changes. It can also happen with Dumping Syndrome.

To help prevent diarrhea, avoid:

- food and fluids that contain caffeine
- alcohol and prune juice
- spicy foods
- high fat or high sugar foods

Drink extra fluids. You may need to take a fibre supplement to help thicken your stool. You may need to add foods that thicken stool to your diet such as bananas, applesauce and oatmeal. This depends on the stage of diet you are on when you have diarrhea. Talk to your dietitian.

**If you have diarrhea that continues more than 3 days, contact the Bariatric Clinic.**



## Gas

After surgery it is normal to have pain or discomfort from gas in your abdomen. As your bowel starts to move, the gas moves too.

Food is a common cause of gas. Foods that may cause gas are:

- beans, lentils, legumes
- vegetables such as broccoli, cauliflower
- melons
- apple skins
- eggs
- beer
- carbonated drinks
- dietetic products that contain sugar alcohols



To help prevent gas:

- eat slowly
- chew food well
- avoid skipping meals
- avoid straws
- avoid chewing gum

If you snore or breathe through your mouth, you may also have more gas.

### Hair or Skin Changes

Hair thinning or loss and skin changes can happen after rapid weight loss. You may be the only one who can see your hair loss.

Your hair grows back as your body recovers.

To help prevent problems:

- follow your diet plan
- make sure you get enough protein and water in your diet
- take your pre-natal and calcium and vitamin D supplements each day



### Vitamin and Mineral Deficiencies

As you recover and adjust to your new lifestyle your needs may change.

It is very important to follow the diet and vitamin and mineral supplementation guidelines advised. Refer to page 56 to 61 for information on vitamins and minerals.

After bypass surgery you have an increased risk of developing serious and life-threatening problems from a nutritional deficiency.

Following your diet and taking your vitamin and mineral supplements as directed will help prevent problems and help you feel better, stronger, and healthier.

Blood tests will be done and monitored before surgery and at your follow-up appointments to assess for vitamin and mineral deficiencies. You may need to take more supplements.

Some vitamin and mineral deficiencies do not have obvious symptoms.

**It is very important that you come to your follow-up appointments and that you get your blood tests done 5 weeks before your scheduled visits. This is the only way that we can know if you have a deficiency.**

