

Bariatric Liquid Diet: The First 2-3 Weeks After Surgery



Good nutrition helps your body heal. Because your stomach is very small after surgery, you will only drink liquid meals and avoid foods that need chewing. This handout explains what to eat and drink each day until your first follow-up visit after bariatric surgery.

First 1 to 2 Days in the Hospital

Your nurse will ask you to slowly sip water from a 1-ounce medicine cup over 15 minutes. If you can tolerate water, you will start the Bariatric Liquid Diet.

Bariatric Liquid Diet

Starting Day 1 or Day 2:

- All foods must be blended until thin, smooth, and easy to pour.
- Most foods should be high in protein or be protein shakes.
- Stay on the Bariatric Liquid Diet until your first follow-up visit.

Your Daily Nutrition Goals At Home

60 Ounces of Hydrating Liquids

This is your most important goal. Drink at least 12 ounces between protein meals. Sip slowly. See the “Hydrating Liquids” handout for examples.

60 Grams Liquid Protein

Food scales measure weight, **not** grams of protein. Your goal is about 15 grams of protein in each of 4–5 liquid meals. Use a calorie-tracking app to help you count protein.

Choosing and Preparing Foods

- All foods **must** be blended in a blender or food processor.
 - You do not need to blend smooth yogurt, pudding, thinned cream of rice, grits, or cream of wheat.
 - If blended food is too thick, it can cause pain or make food or foamy liquid come back up.
 - To thin foods, blend soft-cooked foods with high-protein milk or bone broth until it pours easily.
 - You can add blended baby food meats (chicken, beef, ham, or turkey) or half a scoop of unflavored protein powder to increase protein.
 - **Do not eat solid pieces or chunks.** Strain blended foods through a mesh strainer or cheesecloth to remove solids.



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this handout.

- Choose protein foods first. Vegetables or fruits should be added after you meet your protein goal.
- Half of a protein shake can be a quick meal. See the “Choosing Protein Supplements” handout for more ideas.

Meal Amounts

- Each meal is no more than 4 ounces (½ cup) total.
- You may only be able to tolerate a very small amount at first. Go slow and increase as you can, to reach your goal of ½ cup over ½ hour (30 minutes).

How to Reach 60 Grams of Protein Each Day

- Choose a protein shake with about 30 grams of protein in 11.5 ounces. This makes it easier to get 15 grams from half a shake.
- Drink half of a 30 g protein shake 4 times during the day. This gives you 60 grams of protein from two shakes.
- Another option: drink half of a 30-gram protein shake for two meals (15 grams each). For the other two meals, use food from the list below to reach about 15 grams of protein each meal.

To track your protein:

- Use a calorie-tracking app to add up protein grams.
- Or use the charts in the “Bariatric Diet: Tracking Liquids” handout.

Food Servings That Provide 7 Grams of Protein

Food	Serving size with 7 grams of protein
Blended tuna	⅓ cup (1 ounce)
Blended salmon or white fish (steamed or poached)	⅓ cup (1 ounce)
Blended cottage cheese	¼ cup (2 ounces)
Blended soft cheese	⅓ cup (1 ounce)
“Strained” baby food meats: turkey, beef, or ham	¼ cup (2 ounces) = 1 jar
Plain Greek yogurt (no fruit added)	½ cup (4 ounces)
Cream of wheat or cream of rice cereal, made with high-protein milk instead of water	½ cup (4 ounces)
Blended silken tofu	½ cup (3 ounces)
Blended and strained pea, lentil, or bean soup with added protein powder	½ cup (4 ounces)

You can add protein powder or high-protein milk to these foods to reach about 15 g of protein. See the “Choosing Protein Supplements” handout for tips on adding protein powder to foods without making them gritty.

Planning for the Day

Your main job right now is to sip liquids throughout the day.

- Use a planner or your phone to make a daily nutrition plan.
- Set timers or alarms on your phone or the *Baritastic* app every 3–4 hours for meals.
- Plan 4–5 liquid meals with protein each day.
- Drink at least 8–12 ounces of hydrating liquids between meals

Sample Plan for 1 Meal and Hydration Cycle

Repeat this pattern every 3 hours during the day:

- 8 to 8:30 a.m. ----- Meal #1
- 8:30 to 9 a.m. ----- Nothing to drink or eat
- 9 to 10:30 a.m. ----- Hydrating liquids
- 10:30 to 11 a.m. ----- Nothing to drink or eat

Sample Day Menu for Home Blended Diet

Meal #1 <i>10-15 grams protein</i>	4 ounces plain Greek yogurt with added sugar-free Jello powdered mix or another sugar-free flavor enhancer.
Between Meals: • 30 minutes ----- Nothing • 1½ hours ----- 12 ounces Sugar-free flavored water • 30 minutes ----- Nothing Follow this same “Between Meals” pattern for the rest of the day.	
Meal #2 <i>11-15 grams protein</i>	4 ounces protein shake. Ok to have up to 5 oz of shake over ½ hour if tolerated.
Meal #3 <i>10-15 grams protein</i>	4 ounces lentil soup (blended) with ½ scoop unflavored protein powder
Meal #4 <i>15-20 grams protein</i>	1-2 ounces chicken, pork, or fish blended with bone broth or high-protein milk until thin and easy to pour 1 ounce of blended carrots or other vegetable is ok.
Meal #5 <i>11-15 grams protein</i>	4 ounces protein shake. Ok to have up to 5 oz of shake over ½ hour if tolerated.

Important Safety Note

- Do **not** change the texture of your diet, even if you feel well. Your surgeon will tell you when it is safe to move to the next stage.
- Do **not** start vitamins yet. Wait until your surgeon says it is OK at your first post-op visit.