

# Bariatric Meal Plans and Ideas

This handout explains how bariatric meal plans progress after surgery, from liquid foods, to soft foods, then regular foods, and finally long-term eating. It includes example menus for each stage.

## Meal Plan Schedules and Ideas

Your food textures will continue to get more dense (solid) as your incisions and swelling heals. The diet textures and portions will help you avoid uncomfortable symptoms and intestinal complications.

Your provider **must** tell you it is safe before you move on to the next diet stage. They will talk with you about your diet plan at your follow-up appointments, 2 weeks and 6 weeks after surgery.

## Rules for Every Diet Phase

No matter what type of diet you are eating, there are 2 important rules you must **always** follow:

1. Each meal should take about **30 minutes** to finish. Eat slowly, take small bites, chew well, and pause between bites.
2. It is important **not** to eat and drink at the same time. Drink liquids **at least 30 minutes before** you eat, and wait **at least 30 minutes after** you finish eating before you drink again. This means:
  - Eat → wait 30 minutes → drink → wait 30 minutes → eat

## Liquid Foods Phase

	Hydrating Liquids	Protein (blended)	Vegetable (blended)	Fruit (blended)	Healthy Fat (smooth)	Whole Grains
<b>Meal #1</b>	none	15 g in 4-5 oz	1 tsp	1 tsp	1 tsp	none
<i>30 minute break → 10-16 ounces liquids → 30 minute break</i>						
<b>Meal #2</b>	none	15 g in 4-5 oz	1 tsp	1 tsp	1 tsp	none
<i>30 minute break → 10-16 ounces liquids → 30 minute break</i>						
<b>Meal #3</b>	none	15 g in 4-5 oz	1 tsp	1 tsp	1 tsp	none
<i>30 minute break → 10-16 ounces liquids → 30 minute break</i>						
<b>Meal #4</b>	none	15 g in 4-5 oz	1 tsp	1 tsp	1 tsp	none
<i>30 minute break → 10-16 ounces liquids → 30 minute break → 10-16 ounces liquids</i>						
<b>Goals:</b>	64 oz	60+ g	1-2 servings per day	1-2 servings per day	4 tsp	none

- Choose foods from the *Bariatric Liquid Foods* handout.
- Avoid any caffeine, citrus, or acidic beverages or foods. See the *Bariatric Hydrating Liquids* handout.
- Focus on protein at every meal.



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## Liquid Diet: Example Day

- **Meal #1:** Half of a 30 g protein shake (15 g protein) or protein powder added to smooth blended food
- **Meal #2:** Half of a 30 g protein shake (15 g protein) or protein powder added to smooth blended food
- **Meal #3:** Half of a 30 g protein shake (15 g protein) or protein powder added to smooth blended food
- **Meal #4:** Half of a 30 g protein shake (15 g protein) or protein powder added to smooth blended food

Before fat, follow the table above. Add 1 tsp smooth blended vegetable or fruit or 1 tsp smooth baby food.

Add 1 tsp of smooth, healthy fat to each of these meals. Try 1/8 avocado, 1 tsp olive oil, 1 tsp hummus, or 1 tsp guacamole

## When can I change my diet?

At your 2-week check-up, your doctor will see how you are doing with the liquid diet and if it is safe for you to eat thicker foods. Then, you will get instructions in an online group session.



**Do NOT move onto the next diet phase until your provider tells you to.**

## Soft Foods Phase

You will meet with a dietitian to learn about which foods are tolerated, which to avoid, and how to best move forward on this diet texture.

- Choose foods from the *Soft Foods* handout. Food must be *low-density* (not heavy), moist, and soft enough that it passes easily through a flat fork.
- Your total meal size will be no more than ½ cup of food.
- It is very important to separate all liquids from all foods.

	<b>Hydrating Liquids</b>	<b>Protein</b> (shake, powder, fork passes thru)	<b>Vegetable all types</b> (canned or cooked)	<b>Fruit</b> (canned or cooked)	<b>Healthy Fat</b> (no chunks, bumps, lumps)	<b>Whole Grains</b> (very soft is ok)
<b>Meal #1</b>	none	15-20 g				½ cup
<i>30 minute break → 10-16 ounces liquids → 30 minute break</i>						
<b>Meal #2</b>	none	15-20 g	1 Tbsp	1 Tbsp	1-2 tsp	none
<i>30 minute break → 10-16 ounces liquids → 30 minute break</i>						
<b>Meal #3</b>	none	15-20 g	1 Tbsp	1 Tbsp	1-2 tsp	none
<i>30 minute break → 10-16 ounces liquids → 30 minute break</i>						
<b>Meal #4</b>	none	15-20 g	1 Tbsp	1 Tbsp	1-2 tsp	none
<i>30 minute break → 10-16 ounces liquids → 30 minute break</i>						
<b>Meal #5</b>	none	15-20 g	1 Tbsp	1 Tbsp	1-2 tsp	none
<i>30 minute break → 10-16 ounces liquids → 30 minute break → 10-16 ounces liquids</i>						
<b>Goals:</b>	<b>64 oz</b>	<b>80+ g</b>	<b>2 times each day</b>	<b>2 times each day</b>	<b>Each meal</b>	<b>1 time each day</b>

## Soft Foods: Example Day

- **Meal #1** – ½-1 full protein shake
- **Meal #2** – 1 soft egg and 1 oz soft cheese
- **Meal #3** – 6 ounces Greek yogurt with protein powder and sugar-free flavor added
- **Meal #4** – ½ cup 2% or 4% cottage cheese and 1-2 slices of canned peaches
- **Meal #5** – ¼ cup canned tuna with avocado, or mayo, or Greek yogurt added, and 3-4 canned green beans

 **Do NOT move onto the next diet phase until your provider tells you to.**

## Regular Foods Phase

When your provider tells you to start this phase, your intestine and swelling should be healed. You can slowly change your diet textures over the next 6-9 months, depending on your stomach’s sensitivity.

	Hydrating Liquids	Protein	Vegetable	Fresh Fruit	Healthy Fat	Whole Grains
<b>Meal #1</b>	None	30 g	None	None	None	None
<i>30 minute break → 10-16 ounces liquids → 30 minute break</i>						
<b>Meal #2</b>	None	20 g	¼ cup	¼ cup	1-2 tsp	½ cup
<i>30 minute break → 10-16 ounces liquids → 30 minute break</i>						
<b>Meal #3</b>	None	20 g	¼ cup	¼ cup	1-2 tsp	½ piece
<i>30 minute break → 10-16 ounces liquids → 30 minute break</i>						
<b>Meal #4</b>	None	20 g	¼ cup	¼ cup	1-2 tsp	1 teaspoon
<i>30 minute break → 10-16 ounces liquids → 30 minute break</i>						
<b>Meal #5</b>	None	20 g	¼ cup	¼ cup	1-2 tsp	None
<i>30 minute break → 10-16 ounces liquids → 30 minute break → 10-16 ounces liquids</i>						
<b>Goals:</b>	<b>64 oz</b>	<b>80+ g</b>	<b>2-3 times each day</b>	<b>2 times each day</b>	<b>Each meal</b>	<b>2 times each day</b>

- Choose foods identified in the *Advancing to Regular Foods* handout
- Total meal size is about ½ cup of food total volume. Don’t push it. Eat to your comfort.
- Protein is the most important at all mealtimes

## Regular Foods: Example Day

- **Meal #1** – 1 full protein shake
- **Meal #2** – ½ cup bean and ground chicken chili
- **Meal #3** – 2 slice deli turkey, 1 oz sliced cheese, and 2 wheat Ritz crackers
- **Meal #4** – 6 oz (¾ cup) Greek yogurt and ¼ cup berries
- **Meal #5** – 2 oz baked fish, ¼ sweet potato, 1 broccoli floret, olive oil drizzled on your foods

Over time you will be able to eat larger portions. Remember to listen to your body to avoid overeating. Overeating slows down weight loss and adds to weight regain.

As your stomach becomes less sensitive to the meal size, review the handouts *Bariatric Plate Plan* and *Tips for Lifelong Success* to help you stay on track.



**Do NOT move onto the next diet phase until your provider tells you to.**

## Long-Term Diet

**Changes in your stomach over time:** After surgery, your stomach is very sensitive. This helps you notice when you are full, so you eat smaller amounts. Over time, this strong “full” feeling becomes weaker. This can make it easier to eat bigger portions.

When you start eating bigger meals, you should **have fewer meals and snacks** each day. Meals larger than 1 ½ cups can increase your hunger.

**Meal spacing rule:** Wait at least **3 hours** between meals, but do not wait more than **5 hours** between meals.

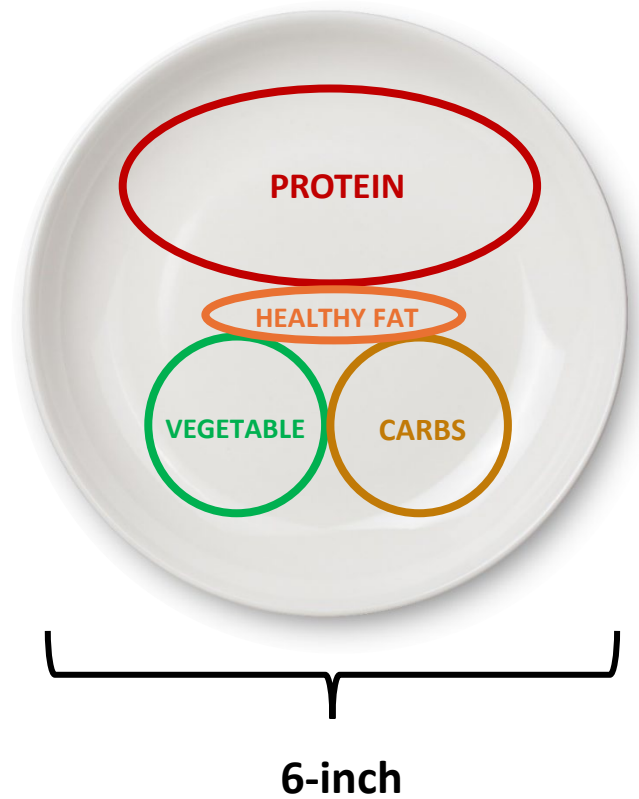
	Hydrating Liquids	Protein	Vegetable	Fresh Fruit	Fat	Whole Grains
<b>Meal #1</b>	None	15-20 g		½ cup	3-4 tsp	¼ cup
<i>30 minute break → 10-16 ounces liquids → 30 minute break</i>						
<b>Meal #2</b>	None	15-20 g	½ cup	¼ cup	3-4 tsp	1 piece
<i>30 minute break → 10-16 ounces liquids → 30 minute break</i>						
<b>Meal #3</b>	None	15-20 g	¼ cup	None	3-4 tsp	¼ cup
<i>30 minute break → 10-16 ounces liquids → 30 minute break</i>						
<b>Meal #4</b>	None	15-20 g	½ cup	None	15-20 g	¼ cup
<i>30 minute break → 10-16 ounces liquids → 30 minute break → 10-16 ounces liquids</i>						
<b>Goals:</b>	<b>64 ounces</b>	<b>60+ g</b>	<b>3 times each day</b>	<b>2 times each day</b>	<b>Each meal</b>	<b>1-2 times each day</b>

### Long-Term Diet: Example Day

- **Meal #1** – 6 oz (¾ cu-3p) Greek yogurt, ¼ cup berries, 1-2 Tablespoons Grape Nuts
- **Meal #2** – 2-3 oz chicken, ½ cup spinach salad, ¼ cup chopped apple, 1 tablespoon walnuts, 1 slice toasted whole grain bread, 1 tablespoon mayo
- **Meal #3** – 2 oz cheese, ¼ cup sliced red bell peppers, 4 whole grain crackers,
- **Meal #4** – 3-4 oz fish, ½ cup broccoli, 1 Tablespoon olive oil, ¼ cup brown rice

## Tips For Your Long-Term Diet

- Total meal size is about **1 cup of food after gastric bypass** or **1½ cup after gastric sleeve**.
- Always focus on **protein** at every meal.
- See *Bariatric Plate Plan* and *Tips for Lifelong Success* for food ideas and resources.



## Questions?

Your questions are important. Call your doctor or healthcare provider if you have questions or concerns.

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