

## **Preparing for Surgery**

*For weight loss surgery patients*

*This section of the Guide to Your Weight Loss Surgery explains self-care, coping with lifestyle changes, and diet instructions before and after surgery.*

### **Your Pre-Surgery Clinic Visit**

Several weeks before your surgery, you will meet with members of your health care team in the Surgical Specialties Center to review:

- Specific diet instructions you must follow
- Anesthesia that will be used during surgery
- Packing for the hospital
- Care after surgery

You may also choose to meet with a social worker and a research coordinator at this time (see pages 23 and 24).

### **Your Diet Before Surgery**

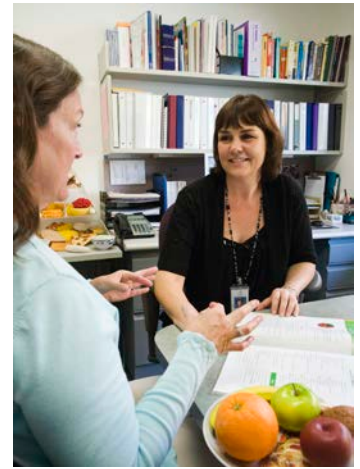
Before surgery, you will also meet with a dietitian, who will review important changes you must make to your eating habits. These changes will help you prepare for your diet after surgery.

#### **The Very Low Calorie Diet**

Three weeks before your surgery, you will start following a Very Low Calorie Diet (VLCD). On this diet, you will eat only 1,000 calories a day. This will shrink your liver, which will make your surgery safer.

Your dietitian will give you a VLCD meal plan that will help you lose several pounds. You will need to keep a food diary while you are on this diet. You will also be expected to exercise to help with weight loss. Continue this regular exercise, but stop if you get dizzy or lightheaded during an exercise session.

Your dietitian will also talk with you about your diet after surgery, and how you will eat and drink for the rest of your life. You will receive some sample recipes to get you started.



*You will meet with a dietitian before surgery to review important changes you must make in your eating habits.*

## **Managing Diabetes on the Very Low Calorie Diet (VLCD)**

If you have diabetes:

- Talk with your doctor who manages your diabetes. You may need to make changes in your diabetes medicine while you are on the VLCD.
- You will need to check your blood sugars often. Your doctor will tell you when and how often to test your blood sugars.
- Do **not** use low-carbohydrate supplement drinks or low-carbohydrate frozen meals. Your body needs carbohydrates while you are on the VLCD.
- If you get low blood sugar while on the VLCD, treat your symptoms with  $\frac{1}{2}$  cup fruit juice followed by  $\frac{1}{2}$  sandwich or crackers with cheese or peanut butter.

## **What You Will Learn at Your Clinic Visit**

At your clinic visit before surgery, your nurse will give you some educational handouts and review what you must do and not do before and after surgery. Your nurse will also talk with you about possible complications or problems that could occur after surgery, and when you should call for help.

You will receive contact phone numbers for the Center for Bariatric Surgery Clinic and the after-hours line. Keep these numbers by your phone. Also keep them in your wallet or in your cell phone so they are handy if you are away from home and need to call for advice.

The nurse will talk with you and your family or support person about equipment and supplies that you might need to buy after surgery. These may include a hospital bed, a *commode* (portable toilet), and a shower chair.

The nurse will also make sure you and your family are able to prepare your meals after you get home from the hospital. It is best to have a family member or support person who can stay with you for 1 to 2 weeks after surgery to help prepare meals and provide care as needed.

## **If You Have Diabetes**

If you have diabetes, your nurse will remind you to schedule an appointment after surgery with your doctor who manages your diabetes. This visit should take place 1 week after you go home from the hospital or care facility. At this visit, your doctor should check your blood sugar levels and adjust your diabetes medicines, if needed.

## **Pre-Anesthesia Clinic Visit**

Several weeks before your surgery, you will have an appointment at the Pre-Anesthesia Clinic, which is next to the Surgical Specialties Center. You will meet with a nurse there who will review your medical history, medicines you are currently taking, and lab work to make sure you are ready for surgery. More tests may be ordered at this time.

An *anesthesiologist* (a doctor who specializes in pain medicine) in the Pre-Anesthesia Clinic will give the final approval for your surgery.

## **Packing for Your Stay in the Hospital**

### **What to Bring**

- Before you come to the hospital for your surgery, pack a small suitcase or duffel bag with:
  - Bathrobe and slippers
  - Comfortable clothes to wear home
  - Magazines, books, needlework, and other hobbies
  - Your medicines
- On the day of surgery, bring:
  - Some money to pay for the medicines you will need after surgery
  - A complete list of your medicines along with the doses
  - Inhalers if you use them (make sure they have not expired)

### **Other Personal Items**

- You do not need to bring your own wheelchair to the hospital. The hospital will provide you with a bariatric wheelchair, if needed.
- If you bring a cane, walker, or special wheelchair to the hospital, be sure to label it with your name and hospital room number.
- Before surgery, give your dentures, glasses, and contact lenses to your family or support person. Or, you can ask to have them locked in a secure place in the hospital until after your surgery.

### ***If you have sleep apnea:***

- Bring your C-Pap or Bi-Pap machine and mask with you to the hospital.
- Label your supplies with your full name.

### **What Not to Bring**

Leave all valuables at home, including watches and jewelry.

## Resources Provided by Your Social Worker

Your social worker can talk with you about the lifestyle changes, reactions, and stresses that occur before, during, and after gastric bypass surgery. If needed, your social worker will provide brief supportive counseling.

### Community Resources

Your social worker can also refer you to agencies, community resources, or mental health professionals to help you cope with lifestyle and emotional changes. You may request these referrals both before and after surgery.

### Monthly Support Group

We invite you to join the monthly Bariatric Surgery Support Group at any stage in your surgery process. This group is led by the bariatric social worker at UWMC, and it meets:

Day: \_\_\_\_\_ Time: \_\_\_\_\_

This support group is informal and open to UWMC patients, their families, and friends. The group is made up of pre- and post-surgery patients. It is a great way to learn firsthand from the experiences of others. It also gives you the chance to network with and get support from others facing similar challenges.

### Meeting with a Research Coordinator

University of Washington Medical Center (UWMC) participates in many research projects that study how different procedures contribute to the prevention and treatment of diseases linked to obesity. Participating in research at UWMC is voluntary. Your choice about taking part in a study will not affect your surgery or clinical care in any way.

Once you have started your clinic work-up for surgery, a research coordinator may contact you with more information about possible weight loss research studies. These studies are related to obesity, weight loss, and surgery. Most times, research studies are done when you come in for your clinical care, and do not require a lot of extra time.

If you would like to speak with a research coordinator, please e-mail [sorce@u.washington.edu](mailto:sorce@u.washington.edu), or ask your surgeon about research projects related to your health condition.

### Questions?

Your questions are important. Call your doctor or health care provider if you have questions or concerns. UWMC clinic staff are also available to help.

Center for Bariatric  
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