

Pregnancy Nutrition After Bariatric Surgery

This handout explains how to meet your nutrition needs during pregnancy after bariatric surgery. It includes guidance on diet, hydration, vitamins, supplements, exercise, managing side effects, and working with your provider.

Your Diet After Bariatric Surgery

- Eat a wide variety of foods.
- Try to eat less sugar and not too much fruit, especially in the mornings.
- Most food should be fresh and not processed.
- Eat less fast food and packaged food. These often have a lot of salt, sugar, fat, and added ingredients.
- Include foods like protein, fruits, vegetables, grains, lower fat dairy, and healthy fats.
- Eat fish up to 3 times a week. Do not eat more than 1 can of tuna each week.
- If you do not eat meat, get 60 grams of protein from eggs, dairy, beans, soy, and tofu.
- Eating fish and chicken can help you reach your protein goal.
- Each day, try to have 4 servings of dairy or take 2 calcium supplements.
- Whey-based protein shakes can count as a calcium supplement.
- Eat small meals. Try to limit snacks to every 3 hours.

Food Safety:

- Do not drink unpasteurized milk and juice.
- Cook all meat, fish, and pork well. Beef should be cooked to at least medium.
- Wash all vegetables and fruits before eating.
- Avoid swordfish, tilefish, shark, and albacore tuna. They have too much mercury. Learn more about safe fish here: americanpregnancy.org/healthy-pregnancy/mercury-levels-in-fish

Hydration

- Drink 64 ounces (8 cups) of non-bubbly, non-caffeinated, non-alcoholic liquids each day.
- Water helps prevent nausea and constipation.
- If you can't drink enough fluids, call your OB provider immediately.



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Vitamins and Minerals

Procare Bariatric Prenatal

- Take 2 pills each day.
- Contains 75 mcg of Vitamin D, 2000 mcg of B12, 1000 mg folate, and 60 mg iron.

View full list of nutrients:

procarenow.com/products/bariatric-multivitamin-prenatal

- Take with food or applesauce to help with nausea.
- Best to start before you get pregnant or as early as you can.

Nordic Naturals Prenatal DHA

- High-quality omega-3 supplement (480 mg of DHA, 205 mg of EPA, 10 mcg of Vitamin D3).
- Helps your baby's brain and eye development.
- Unflavored is easiest in the first trimester.

Nordic Naturals Postnatal Omega-3

- 2 soft gels contain 586 mg EPA, 456 mg DHA, and 25 mcg of Vitamin D3.
- Take this if you are breastfeeding.

Herbal Supplements

Avoid all herbal supplements unless your OB says they are safe to take. While it is safest to avoid all herbal supplements, the ones listed below do not have any known risks in pregnancy.

- Airborne
- Echinacea
- Fennel seed or capsules
- Red Raspberry Leaf tea
- Calendula Gel
- Emergen-C
- Ginger tea or capsules

What to Avoid:

- Caffeine (coffee, tea, energy drinks, coffee or mocha protein shakes, etc.)
- Alcohol, tobacco, marijuana, and nicotine
- Spicy, greasy, and sour foods. These can cause nausea and heartburn.
- Some herbs are not safe when pregnant, including:
 - Cannabis
 - Kava
 - Peppermint essential oil
 - Goldenseal
 - Chamomile tea
 - Licorice (as an herbal treatment)
 - St. John's Wart
 - Ma Huang

Managing Pregnancy Side Effects

These tips can help you manage or reduce common pregnancy side effects. These options are generally safe to use in pregnancy, but it is important to ask your OB before taking anything new.

Nausea

- Eat small meals or snacks every 3 hours with some protein.
- Complex carbs (like whole grain toast) and salty foods may help.
- Drink water with lemon slices.
- Stay hydrated with 64 ounces of water each day.
- If you can't snack often, take 25 mg Vitamin B6 (pyridoxine) 3 – 4 times each day.
- Other options include:
 - Vitamin B6 50 mg (2 times each day) or 100 mg (1 time each day)
 - Ginger (such as ginger ale, tea, fresh ginger, or tablets)
 - Peppermint
 - Sea-Bands (anti-nausea bracelets)

Leg Cramps

- Take a magnesium supplement (500 mg).
- Drink 64 ounces of water each day.

Heartburn

- Avoid spicy food, citrus, mint, caffeine, and chocolate.
- Take small bites of food and chew very well.
- Stop eating when you feel full.
- Avoid laying down for at least 1 hour after eating any food.
- Heartburn can be caused by constipation (see tips below).

Constipation

- Fiber powder such as Just Better Prebiotic Fiber, or Metamucil.
 - These often have no flavor or texture and can be mixed into drinks.
 - Check the ingredients. Corn fiber makes less gas than other types.
- Miralax (polyethylene glycol)
- Magnesium supplement (500mg)

Diarrhea

- Benefiber (wheat dextrin) thickens stool. You may need to use this more than 1 time each day.

Exercise

- Exercise will help you manage your weight. It also helps with blood sugar control and reduces the risk of gestational diabetes.
- Aim for 30 minutes a day of gentle to moderate activity.
- Walking and yoga are good choices. These websites include tips and a video for doing yoga during each trimester of pregnancy.
 - www.thebump.com/a/prenatal-yoga#4
 - www.youtube.com/watch?v=zmUJWKM98hM

Weight Gain

- **Gaining weight is normal.**
- The usual range of weight gain is about 20 to 25 pounds. Try not to gain more than 30 pounds.
- Try to avoid snacking more than every 3 hours.
- Choose nourishing, healthy foods. Avoid highly processed foods that are low in nutrition.
- Exercise will help you maintain your weight.

Working with Your Provider

- Your OB can give you resources and may connect you with a dietitian.
- You will have extra ultrasounds to check how your baby is growing.
- You may need more blood tests to make sure you're getting the right amount of vitamins and nutrients.
 - Do not take any vitamins or minerals for 3 days (72 hours) before lab tests.
- You will have a "glucose tolerance test" to check for gestational diabetes.
 - If you've had gastric bypass, this test might cause dumping syndrome. Talk to your OB about other options.

Questions?

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

Center for Weight Loss and Metabolic Surgery: 206.598.2274