

Post-Surgery Recovery and Nutrition

Phase-by-Phase Recovery Guide for Bariatric Surgery Patients

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Your step-by-step guide to recovery after bariatric surgery. Following these guidelines closely is essential for healing and long-term success.

Phase 1: Clear Liquids (Days 1-7)

Your stomach is healing. Only thin, clear liquids are allowed:

- Water, sugar-free electrolyte drinks
- Clear broth (chicken, beef, vegetable)
- Sugar-free gelatin
- Decaffeinated tea

Goal: 64 oz fluid daily. Sip constantly — 1-2 oz every 15 minutes.

Phase 2: Full Liquids (Weeks 2-3)

- Protein shakes (whey isolate or plant-based, 20-30g protein per serving)
- Strained cream soups (no chunks)
- Skim or 1% milk, unsweetened almond milk
- Plain Greek yogurt (thinned with milk if needed)

Protein target: 60-80g per day. Protein shakes will be your primary source.

Phase 3: Pureed Foods (Weeks 3-5)

- Scrambled eggs (very soft, moist)
- Pureed lean meats blended with broth
- Mashed avocado, hummus
- Cottage cheese, ricotta
- Baby food (meat-based)

Texture should be smooth with no chunks. If it requires chewing, it is too thick for this phase.

Phase 4: Soft Foods (Weeks 5-8)

- Baked or poached fish, canned tuna
- Ground turkey or chicken

- Soft cooked vegetables
- Soft fruits (bananas, canned peaches)
- Low-fat cheese

Phase 5: Regular Diet (Week 8+)

Gradually introduce regular-texture foods one at a time. Some foods may never be well-tolerated:

- **Common problem foods:** bread/pasta (doughy), red meat (tough), raw vegetables, rice, popcorn, nuts
- **Rule of thumb:** protein first, then vegetables, then complex carbs last
- **Portion size:** approximately 1/2 cup per meal initially, gradually increasing to 1 cup

Lifelong Nutrition Rules

- **Never drink with meals** — wait 30 minutes before and after eating
- **Protein first at every meal** — minimum 60-80g daily for life
- **Take your vitamins daily** — bariatric-specific multivitamin, calcium citrate, B12, iron
- **No carbonated beverages** — can stretch your pouch
- **No straws** — introduces air into your pouch
- **Eat slowly** — 20-30 minutes per meal, tiny bites, chew 20-30 times

Warning Signs — Call Your Surgeon

Contact your surgical team immediately if you experience:

- Fever above 101.5°F
- Persistent vomiting — you cannot keep any fluids down
- Signs of dehydration: dark urine, dizziness, rapid heartbeat
- Increasing abdominal pain not relieved by medication
- Redness, swelling, or drainage from incision sites
- Chest pain or shortness of breath — call 911

Need Personalized Guidance?

MilenAi Digestive Health offers telehealth consultations with a registered nurse specializing in gastroenterology and digestive health. Get one-on-one support for your questions, medication management, and care coordination.

Schedule a Telehealth Visit

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