
Bariatric Surgery Soft Diet Stage Nutrition Therapy

This is the fourth diet stage after bariatric surgery. Soft foods are texture modified and will pass easily from the gastric pouch. Always stop eating when no longer hungry. Fullness will feel different now than before surgery. It takes time to determine foods best tolerated. Remember that everyone progresses at their own pace.

Fluid Goals

Aim to consume at least 48-64 ounces (6-8 cups) of fluids each day. Remember to drink separate from eating and wait at least 30 minutes after each “meal” to drink fluids. Sip water or other sugar-free, unsweetened, non-carbonated, caffeine-free liquids between meals to stay hydrated.

Measuring Guide

Tablespoons	Ounces	Cups
2 Tbsp.	1 oz.	1/8 c.
4 Tbsp.	2 oz.	1/4 c.
8 Tbsp.	4 oz.	1/2 c.
16 Tbsp.	8 oz.	1 c.

Protein Goals

It is essential to consume enough protein during this stage. Most people need 60-80 grams a day but follow your bariatric dietitian’s recommendations. Include protein foods at every meal and eat them first.

Bariatric Dietary Supplements

Take vitamin/mineral supplements daily as prescribed by the bariatric team.

Tips

- Start slowly with this diet stage. Trial one new food at a time. If a food is not tolerated, wait 2-3 weeks before trialing again.
- Chew food well and eat slowly. Take 20-30 minutes to finish a meal.
- Pay attention to how you feel while eating so you know when to stop. Stop eating when you are no longer hungry.
- Don’t force eating more than you can tolerate as this may lead to discomfort in your chest or abdomen or induce vomiting.

- Measure and record intake to make sure you are drinking enough and meeting daily protein needs.
- Set a timer as a reminder to drink and eat.
- It is okay to include planned snacks. Discuss healthy snack suggestions with a dietitian.
- Keep fluids with you always (on your desk, at your bedside, in your car). Never leave home without a water bottle!

Food Choices

Food Group	Foods Recommended	Foods Not Recommended
Protein: Include 1-2 oz. per meal	Thinly sliced, tender meat, poultry, or fish moistened with low fat gravy or sauce	Dry meats and poultry
	Moist ground meat	Dry fish and fish with bones
	Eggs or egg substitute	Any foods with nuts or seeds
	Casseroles with small chunks of meat	
	Tofu or other soy protein foods	
	Creamy peanut butter (natural or low sugar)	
	Beans	
Dairy and Dairy Alternatives: Include 2-3 servings daily	Non-fat (skim) or low-fat (1%) milk	Whole milk
	Fortified non-dairy milk: pea, soy, high-protein almond	Milk or yogurt sweetened with sugar
	Sugar-free pudding	Yogurt with nuts or whole pieces of fruit
	Plain or flavored non-fat or low-fat yogurt, or Greek yogurt without nuts or whole pieces of fruit	
	Non-fat or low-fat cottage cheese or ricotta cheese	
	Low-fat string cheese or shredded cheese	
Vegetables: Pair with a protein	Cooked, tender vegetables	Raw vegetables
	Shredded iceberg lettuce	Cooked corn
		Fibrous or stringy cooked vegetables

Fruit: Pair with a protein	Fruits canned in water or own juice	Stringy fruits (papaya, pineapple, or coconut)
	Cooked fruits	Fresh fruits difficult to chew (apples, pears)
	Soft, peeled fresh fruits (peaches, nectarines, kiwi, mangoes, cantaloupe, honeydew, watermelon without seeds)	Fresh fruits with edible skins (grapes)
	Soft berries with small seeds	Dried fruits, fruit leather, fruit roll-ups, fruit snacks
		Fruit juice
Grains: From 1-2 servings daily	Toast	Coarse, dry cereals (shredded wheat)
	Mashed or baked potatoes or sweet potatoes	Bread dressing
	Moistened cooked or dry cereals	Rice
	Short pasta and noodles	Cakes, cookies that are chewy, dry, high in sugar and/or fat
Fats and Oils	Limited amounts of high-fat condiments (mayonnaise, salad dressing)	

Common Food Intolerances

Some foods may not be tolerated or enjoyed in the same way they were prior to surgery. These foods might include doughy breads, rice, pasta, red meat, jerky and certain raw fruits and vegetables. Refined carbohydrates like white breads, rice and pastas expand in your new structure which can cause discomfort and feel as if the food is getting stuck.

Other foods may need to be avoided or limited after surgery as they are difficult to digest or could cause impaction if too large a quantity is eaten. These foods might include granola, nuts, seeds, coconut, dried fruit and corn or popcorn. It is best to avoid the foods for at least 3 months after surgery. When a particular food is not tolerated, it is best to wait 2-3 weeks before trialing again.

Sample Meal Plan

Aim to consume 4-6 planned meals with each meal up to a volume of 4 oz. (1/2 c.). It is important to work up slowly to these amounts. Remember to separate meals from liquids by at least 30 minutes.

Meal	Liquids	Portion
	Water	4-8 oz.
Scrambled egg with 1 oz. low-fat cheese and ½ slice wheat toast		4 oz.
	Water/sugar-free liquid	4-8 oz.
8 oz. protein supplement		
	Water/sugar-free liquid	4-8 oz.
1-2 oz. (¼ c.) tuna mixed with lite mayonnaise and 1-2 oz. cooked green beans		4 oz.
	Water	4-8 oz.
8 oz. protein supplement or ¼ c. low-fat cottage cheese with ¼ c. fruit canned in water or own juice		
	Water/sugar-free liquid	4-8 oz.
1-2 oz. baked chicken with ¼ c. cooked carrots		4 oz.
	Water	4-8 oz.
8 oz. protein supplement or ½ c. Greek yogurt		
	Water	4-8 oz.

Cooking Methods

- Prepare meals and cook ahead when you are not hungry.
- Bake, broil, grill, roast, or stew instead of frying or cooking in fat (butter/oil). It may take a few months after surgery to tolerate grilled meats as this method tends to dry out some proteins.
- Use nonstick cookware as little to no oil is required to prevent sticking. This allows you to cook with less fat (butter/oil) and calories.
- Sauté foods in a small amount of broth (chicken, beef, or vegetable) instead of using butter/oil. This will also add more flavor to the food and ensure the item stays moist.
- Remove fat from cooked ground meat by draining on a rack or using a paper towel to soak up excess fat.
- When making stews or soups, refrigerate the broth and skim hardened fat off the top before reheating and serving.
- Substitute creams with a small spoonful of non-fat Greek yogurt or non-fat or low-fat cream cheese when making cream sauces.