

---

# Vitamin and Mineral Supplements for Bariatric Surgery Patients

---

You will start taking vitamins and minerals soon after surgery. It will usually be about the same time you start to eat more solid foods. Deficiencies may occur after surgery because of the small amounts of food you are able to eat and from changes in digestion.

- For the rest of your life, you will need to take one or two complete multivitamins with minerals, calcium and vitamin D daily. You may also need to take others including thiamin, vitamin B12, folate, and iron.
- These supplements do not take the place of a healthy diet, but they can enrich it! Each vitamin and mineral are needed for your health, but they do not provide energy. Your dietitian can review your eating pattern for important vitamins and minerals.
- The type of surgery and your individual needs will decide which vitamins and minerals your bariatric team suggests. Check-up visits and lab tests will also help your medical team identify your needs.
- Read labels on vitamins! A serving size can vary from 1 to 4 pills to get the nutrient content listed. Make sure the dose and form of the vitamin is what your bariatric team advised.

## Multivitamin/ Mineral

- Choose a “complete” multivitamin with minerals.
- You may need to begin with a chewable version. Your bariatric team will tell you if you need to take one or two of these each day.
- The vitamin needs to contain iron, zinc, copper, thiamin, and selenium.
- Do not buy a men’s multivitamin or ‘senior/silver’ type vitamin. They do not contain iron.
- There are specialty bariatric vitamins available. Check with your surgeon to see what vitamin is best for your needs.

## Calcium/ Vitamin D

- A calcium supplement is usually in the dose of 1000-1500 milligrams per day with vitamin D split into 2-3 separate doses. This allows for the greatest absorption.
- Make sure the calcium is in the “citrate” form since this is best absorbed. This supplement is available in chewable tabs, liquid, powder, crystal, and wafer form.
- Take your calcium supplement separately from other medications and vitamins.

- 
- Check with your bariatric team if you should take a higher dose of vitamin D.
  - Below listed are brands that provide this form of calcium citrate and vitamin D.

### **Vitamin B12**

- You may need to take a vitamin B12 supplement.
- The most common dose is 500-1000 mcg (micrograms).
- B12 can be taken as a pill, a tablet you place under your tongue, or as a monthly injection.

### **Iron**

- Your bariatric team may suggest you take more iron or a higher dose.
- You may be advised to take vitamin C (also called ascorbic acid) with iron to help your body absorb it.

### **Some things to remember about your vitamins:**

- Use water to swallow your pills. Do not use coffee, tea, soda, juice, or alcohol drinks.
- Store vitamins in a cool, dry place. Avoid humid places such as the fridge or bathroom. Keep them out of the sunlight because some vitamins are destroyed by light.
- Check the expiration date and use by this date.
- Try to choose supplements with the least amount of other ingredients (for example sugars, herbals, or caffeine).
- Avoid herbs and herbal extracts without talking to your physician first.