

GUIDE TO HEALTHY LIVING (LIFE INSTRUCTIONS)

Your weight-loss surgery is the major step in your journey to becoming healthy. As you progress in your journey, it is important that you embrace a completely different way of living your life—free from constant dieting and hunger.

You will always be mindful of your weight but close attention to your behaviors and choices will keep you on track. Weigh yourself weekly and track your progress. Weight fluctuations are normal, but if you notice that your weight is beginning to trend upwards, it is time to re-evaluate your behaviors and adherence to the rules.

If this happens, re-visit pertinent sections of your manual to help guide you back. Make appointments with your weight loss team and attend Support Group. Many times, re-committing to the program and reconnecting with your team will correct any issues.

As you embark on your weight-loss journey, many issues may arise. These issues can sidetrack or skyrocket your success.

Friends and Family

Weight-loss surgery can be a private and personal matter for many people. Other people may be inclined to share their story with anyone. How you choose to share or not share your story is your choice. Following are three common situations:

1. Sometimes friends and family members don't understand what it is like to be overweight and deal with the daily struggle related to being overweight.
2. Sometimes they believe the myth that obesity is a direct cause of no self-control.
3. Some people may feel that you have taken an easy way to solve your weight issues or may even think that you haven't tried hard enough to lose weight without considering surgery.

Taking all of these options into consideration, it can be very difficult to decide what to tell the people around you. Some people choose to tell folks that they are having gallbladder surgery or a hernia repair. Others prefer to say nothing. Whatever you choose, please know that we will not tell anyone anything about your medical issues.

It has been our experience that being honest and open is usually the best approach. But we will honor your wishes and support you.

Expectations

Please don't be hard on yourself! Everyone is different—we heal at a different rate, we accommodate differently to the new lifestyle, we tolerate foods differently, we progress at different levels. It is terribly unfair to yourself to compare yourself to others.

In about a year from your surgery, if you've followed the rules, everyone should be at approximately the same place—healthier and lighter in body weight.

The Rules

Rules for your ultimate success are simple and easy to follow. The rules have been developed with your success in mind. Your weight-loss team is here to help you understand, and be obedient to, the rules.

If you break the rules consistently, you will gain weight and become unhealthy again. It is expected that you will follow these rules. Every member of your weight loss team will recommend that you follow these rules.

Rule #1: Protein First

Always eat the protein part of your meal first. You should be having 60 to 90 grams of protein every day. You should be eating 3 meals a day. Sometimes it is difficult to get 60 grams of protein in 3 meals without adding in some supplementation. A protein shake is a great way to supplement.

When choosing an appropriate protein shake, consider the following:

- ✓ 20 to 30 grams of protein per serving
- ✓ Whey protein when tolerated. If unable to tolerate whey, use a pea based protein shake
- ✓ Half the total amount of carbs (10 to 15 carbs if your protein is 20 to 30 grams)
 - Premier shakes: 30 grams of protein and 5 carbs/serving
 - Unjury® powder: 20 grams of protein and 3 carbs/serving
 - Bariatric Fusion Powder: 27 grams of protein and 9 carbs/serving

Rule #2: Stay Hydrated

You need to drink at least 64 ounces of water every day. You may have other fluids in addition to water like iced tea, Crystal Light™ or Propel™. Skim milk can also be used as a fluid. Fluids should be calorie free. You can gauge your hydration status by the color of your urine. The darker your urine, the more dehydrated you are. Your urine should be light yellow in color.

Rule #3: Exercise

You should exercise every day for at least 150 minutes per week. After your weight loss surgery, your exercise routine will just consist of walking until you are released to do more. You may want to join a gym, walk/run on a treadmill, take a water aerobics class, or take up hiking. Whatever you choose to do for exercise, make sure you have fun doing it. You will stick with an activity if you enjoy it. Just like you're monitoring your weight loss progress, measure your exercise/fitness progress, too.

Rule #4: Vitamins and Minerals

You must take a good quality multivitamin with iron and calcium citrate supplements every day. For the first 4-6 weeks after your weight-loss surgery, these supplements are preferred in chewable form. After that time, you can take pills that can be swallowed. Many times, laboratory tests will be drawn to monitor for vitamin and mineral deficiencies. If any deficiencies are identified, additional supplementation will be suggested and/or prescribed.

Rule #5: Support Group

It is extremely important to attend Support Group meetings. Support Group meetings are specially designed to help you be successful. Topics of interest and handouts are presented by content experts. You will have the opportunity to interact with others who are on the same journey. Support Group attendance will keep you on track.

For a calendar of upcoming Support Groups, please see: *Section 2 of this manual under Forms/Schedules.*

Rule #6: Don't Believe Everything You Read or Hear

There is a lot of information about weight-loss surgery. You can find this information on the internet, at Support Groups, from friends and neighbors and from your weight loss team. Sadly, a lot of the information you get from sources other than your weight loss team may be harmful instead of helpful.

Many sources have a different set of “rules” to follow or contradict advice given by your weight-loss team. Remember that your program and your weight loss team have been created and educated to help you be successful. Your weight-loss team is always available to help you—just give them a call and set up an appointment.

For telephone numbers, please see: *Section 1 of this manual under Weight Loss Center Team Roles.*

Rule #7: Prevent Nausea

It is important to prevent nausea after weight loss surgery. Nausea can lead to vomiting which can complicate your surgery.

Many times nausea is caused by not following your diet progression as you were instructed by the dietitian.

- ❖ Cut your food into small bites and chew them thoroughly.
- ❖ Do not eat 30 minutes prior to, during, or 30 minutes after your meals
- ❖ Eat slowly
- ❖ Drinking too much can also cause nausea. It is important that you sip fluids consistently throughout the day instead of drinking large amounts at any one time.
- ❖ Stop eating when you have eaten your allotted amount of food. Do not pick at leftovers on your plate or table. If you are full, stop eating, even if you haven't eaten everything you've measured.

Rule #8: Attend Your Follow-up Appointments

Your weight-loss procedure is only one part of getting you healthy. Follow-up appointments with your weight-loss team members are another part of your optimal success. You should be prepared to attend appointments regularly for the first year after you have your surgery.

These appointments will be used to monitor your progress and help hold you accountable. Your weight-loss progress will be evaluated and any difficulties/questions will be addressed.

*It is a good idea to write down any questions/concerns you may have in the Notes/Journal found under Section 8 of this manual.
This will help to keep you focused.*

Rule #9: Don't Hesitate to Reach Out to Your Weight Loss Team Members

If you are struggling or need assistance, please call your weight loss team members. Do not let weeks or months go by if you are struggling. Pick up the phone and make an appointment. Your success depends on it.

For telephone numbers, please see: *Section 1 of this manual under Weight Loss Center Team Roles.*

Additional Information

Medications

You will be discharged from the hospital with a prescriptions for pain control medications. You may also be given a prescription for anti-nausea medication.

If prescribed, you should wean yourself off your narcotic pain medication when you are able. When your pain can be controlled with acetaminophen, quit taking the narcotic pain medication. You can use liquid acetaminophen.

Take care not to use ibuprofen, aspirin, or Advil™ containing products.

Be sure you take your multivitamins and calcium citrate as you have been instructed. Continue to take your regular medications as instructed at hospital discharge. If you have any questions about your prescription medication, it is helpful to contact the doctor who prescribes them.

During Your Recovery Phase

Many people can feel exhausted after surgery. This is normal. You have had surgery, been given medications, and are very excited to enter this new part of your life.

Your body needs time to adjust after surgery. Make sure you are following the rules and get enough rest to help your body heal. Good protein intake at this time helps your body heal, too.

Sometimes people feel weepy and depressed after surgery. This is common and can be related to healing and eliminating the medications given during surgery. You may feel emotional as your energy reserves are taxed. These feelings will pass, and in a short time, your energy levels will return.

Sometimes an appointment with the counselor can help during this time. Please call the clinic to schedule this appointment.

Things That Are Good to Know

Parties

Plan ahead for challenging situations that you will encounter. Overeating at holiday parties or family get-togethers is easy to do. Since snacking is against the rules, make your holiday party or family get-together one of your meals. Always put food onto your plate-never eat from the serving dish. This prevents mindless eating and will help you to watch your portions. Be sure to take only the amount of food that you should eat. Choose protein foods and remember to eat slowly and chew well. Bring a snack to your party that are low carb, high protein.

Body Image Concerns

As your body changes in weight and size, it is likely you will not recognize these changes as other people do. It takes time for your brain to catch up with what your body is doing. People will be curious what is happening with you—what you tell them is up to you.

Sex and You

Changes in sexual patterns are common after weight loss surgery. Overall increases in frequency, quality and enjoyment are most common. There are numerous reasons that this may occur:

- Decreased inhibition
- Increased self-esteem
- Increase physical comfort

Be Selfish

Take time for yourself and your body. Focus on your internal assets, accomplishments and qualities as you proceed on your journey to health. Follow the rules and take time every day for yourself.

Talk about Your Feelings

Communication is the key to maintaining healthy relationships. Share how you feel with those around you. If you are struggling with this aspect of your journey, let your weight loss team members' help. An appointment with the counselor can many times help in the regard. Don't forget that *Support Groups* are a great way to share common feelings/experiences, meet new friends, and solve problems/issues together in an appropriate, healthy way.