Saint Alphonsus Metabolic & Bariatric Center

Guide to Bariatric Success

DIGITAL VERSION

Saint Alphonsus.org/weightloss
Welcome to the Metabolic and Bariatric Center at Saint Alphonsus Regional Medical Center

This Guide to Bariatric Success will prepare you for surgery and help you navigate the path to weight loss and a new healthy lifestyle. We are very pleased to have you as a part of our team and honored to be a part of your journey.

You will hear us say many times that bariatric surgery is an important tool for weight loss, but it is still just a tool. Your journey will be multi-dimensional and you can expect many lifestyle changes along the way. With all of the information that you have access to on websites, blogs, social media etc., it is easy to become overwhelmed. Our team will help provide you with the support, guidance and recommendations for your optimal health every step of the way.

We will ask that you bring this binder to each appointment to use for reference and note taking. Please do not hesitate to ask questions and share your concerns. Our goal is to provide you with clarity and direction to work through the challenges and difficult stages that may arise in this process.

Again, we welcome you to our practice and we are very thrilled for your decision to embrace good health!

Saint Alphonsus Metabolic & Bariatric team
Meet The Team

David J. Brown, MD  
Weight Loss Surgeon

Dr. Brown is board certified in General Surgery and has been practicing as a surgeon for 10 years. He specializes in bariatric procedures including Roux-en-Y gastric bypass and laparoscopic sleeve gastrectomy.

“I believe in a patient-centered practice where each patient is respected and championed in the path to health, independence, and well-being. Utilizing leading edge technology, the latest findings in clinical research, and expertise in nutrition and exercise science, the focus of my practice is assisting each patient in reaching appropriate goals and living a more fulfilling life.”

In his free time, Dr. Brown enjoys history, playing the guitar, running, hiking and spending time with his wife and 4 daughters.

Sonia Taylor, RN, BSN  
Metabolic and Bariatric Clinic Coordinator

Sonia oversees all of the outpatient clinic operations and supports the inpatient experience as well. She is passionate about helping patients with their health quest and believes that all positive changes that can be made along this journey will have lifelong benefits. Please never hesitate to call Sonia with any feedback of the program or questions regarding your personal journey.

Sonia loves to be outside with her two large dogs enjoying the sunshine. When she moved to Boise, she and her husband purchased a 100 year old house and are enjoying fixing it up. If she is not outside having fun she is inside preparing good food for her adult children when they are in town visiting.

Ashley Moeller  
Patient Coordinator

Ashley is an expert when it comes to our patient’s journey, providing support from their first meeting with Dr. Brown, through their surgery and recovery. She also supports patients through her strong knowledge base regarding living a healthy lifestyle. As she works to improve clinic processes, she is instrumental in our clinic accreditation process.

As a former international collegiate athlete, Ashley has always enjoyed staying active. She enjoys sharing her health and nutrition knowledge. Outside of work she loves to spend time with friends, family and especially her adorable dog, Opie.

Staci Williamson  
Insurance Coordinator

Staci handles all things regarding insurance coverage for patients, however, her contribution to the clinic goes much further. Not only does she know all of the ins and outs of insurance, but she also schedules all other procedures and tests that are needed to get the surgery authorized. Staci cares for each patient deeply and is always happy to help in any way that she can.

Outside of work, Staci loves staying active with hunting, camping, being on the lake and participating in archery competitions. Watching her children excel in both school and sports is a great source of pride for her. Her friends and family are the world to her - without them she would not be who she is today.
My Personal Journey

Office visits with Dr. Brown will be scheduled monthly to discuss your weight loss journey. Please come prepared with questions and/or concerns that you may have. This is a perfect time to ask questions regarding your pre-operative health or what to expect after your surgery.

Staci will help keep track of your insurance requirements and tests that are needed before surgery. This is ultimately your responsibility, but she is a great resource to help make sure everything is in order before the request is submitted to your insurance company. You will receive a copy of the tracking form that she uses so you will know where you are in the process of getting approved. Insurance companies have very specific pre-surgical requirements, and it is important to know where you are in that process.

Pre-Operative Class with Sonia is scheduled for __________________________
(This is typically within 2 weeks before your surgery).

Pre-Surgical Screening is scheduled for _______________________________
(This is typically within 2 weeks before your surgery).

Pre-Operative Nutritional Consult is scheduled for ________________________
You will need to have a scheduled visit with the registered dietitian 6 weeks after your surgery. Call 367-3627 to schedule, once you know your surgery date.

Primary Care Follow-up is scheduled for ________________________________
Dr. Brown would like you to follow up with your primary care physician within 1-2 weeks after your bariatric surgery. If you have diabetes or heart issues, a one week time frame is recommended. This is very important because with rapid weight loss, medication requirements often need to be adjusted, which will be monitored by your primary care physician.

Post-operative office visits with Dr. Brown:

- 3 weeks ______________________________________
- 5 weeks ______________________________________
- 2 months _____________________________________
- 3 months _____________________________________
- 4 months _____________________________________
- 5 months _____________________________________
- 6 months _____________________________________
- 7 months _____________________________________
- 8 months _____________________________________
- 9 months _____________________________________
- 10 months ____________________________________
- 11 months ____________________________________
- 12 months ____________________________________
Criteria & Requirements for Bariatric Surgery

Patients Name: ____________________________________________
Insurance: ____________________________________________
Procedure:  □ Sleeve    □ Bypass

Required Criteria:

- 6 Months of Medically Supervised Diet/Exercise Program
- 3-4 Months of Medically Supervised Diet/Exercise Program
- Medical Records to Document Current conditions:
  - 1 year, 2 years, 3 years, 4 years, 5 years
  - Non-medical programs i.e. Weight Watchers, Jenny Craig etc.
- Primary Care Provider Clearance/Recommendation for surgery letter.
- Psychological evaluation
- Dietary Consultation
- Labs
- UGI
- □ Sleep Study  □ Cardiac Consult    □ Pulmonary Consult
- Other: ____________________________________________

For any additional questions regarding the above requirements please contact:
Staci 208-302-2900
staci.axtell@saintalphonsus.org
Glossary of Insurance Terms

- Co-Payment – considered to be “your share” to pay after the insurance company has paid theirs.
- Deductible – the amount you must pay before your insurance company pays anything.
- MNT – medical nutritional therapy.
- Pre-authorization – to obtain insurance companies approval before care is given.
- Benefits – the amount that the insurance company will reimburse for the services provided.
- Claim – to request to pay for services.
- CPT – current procedural terminology (the code).

Evaluations Frequently Required by Insurance Providers

Pre-Operative Psychological Evaluation:
This important step entails a thorough evaluation and clinical interview with a licensed psychologist or psychiatrist. The evaluation, which usually lasts 60-90 minutes, is designed to collect information that is relevant for a patient seeking bariatric surgery. The pre-operative screening helps to evaluate issues that may be a problem after surgery. For example, binge eating, grazing or consuming excessive amounts of sugar are common learned behaviors that can be dealt with prior to surgery. Learning to deal with specific triggers that would typically lead to overeating is very important for your journey to better health.

Pre-Operative Dietitian Evaluation:
Nutrition is one of the largest components of the bariatric puzzle. Meeting with a dietitian prior to your surgery will provide you with a great resource to learn more about your new lifestyle and ask questions. The appointment consists of goal setting, pre and post-operative nutrition specifics, nutritional needs, current dietary intake adjustments, and weight tracking.

The most common time line for appointments with the dietitian will be determined by your surgery dates and your personal needs. The most common protocol for bariatics patients is 1-2 pre-surgery meetings and 2-3 post-operative meetings. The first post-operative meeting should be scheduled for 6 weeks after your surgery. Please call 367-3627 to schedule that appointment.
Evaluations Required by Insurance Providers

Pre-Operative Dietitian Evaluation: (continued)

Family and support people are encouraged to attend this appointment with you.

Many insurance companies provide coverage for nutrition services. We strongly encourage all patients to contact their insurance company to ensure coverage prior to the scheduled appointment. Below are a list of helpful hints when calling the insurance company to verify coverage.

Have your insurance card ready prior to the phone call

- The insurance company may ask for specific insurance codes – the dietitians use 97802 for initial visits and 97803 for follow up visits.
- If the insurance company says that Kyle and Emily are not listed providers – but Saint Alphonsus is, it is likely that it will be a covered service because the dietitian is a Saint Alphonsus employee.

If your insurance company says that they will not pay, but you would still like to be seen (in addition to the mandatory pre-surgical visit), you can pay out of pocket. Appointments are billed in 15 minute increments. Appointment lengths vary.

If you are interested in Saint Alphonsus’ payment plan, that allows you to pay over time, you should have this set up prior to your appointment. Please call 367-2130 to request assistance with this.
Guide to Bariatric Success

Pre-Operative Eating
Meet The Dietitians

Here at Saint Alphonsus, there are two Registered Dietitians that work closely with our patients. Emily Clay and Kyle Kamp. They both bring strength to our program.

Emily completed her undergraduate program from Ohio State University. She began her career at the Barix clinic, specializing in pre and post-operative gastric bypass patients. She then relocated to Atlanta, GA and began consulting with a nationwide long term care company – specializing in short term rehab that allowed her to counsel patients with multiple medical conditions. She and her family landed in Boise, where she is excited to start her new adventure.

Kyle received his undergraduate degree from University of Southern Indiana and was accepted to an internship program at Idaho State University. He had no plans to stay out west after his internship, but he fell in love with all that Idaho has to offer – now being an avid hiker and camper. He enjoys the hiking in the mountains with his wife. He loves to swim, cook and garden – but also has a weird obsession with airplanes.
Healthy Recipes:

Let’s start eating healthy before surgery – it is very important to start making the change in your lifestyle now. Don’t wait until after surgery to make positive changes.

There are so many excellent recipes on the internet for low carbohydrate/higher protein meals. When looking for recipes, try to look for those that use mainly whole foods. Processed foods (foods that come in a package and are made in a factory) typically have less nutrients and higher amounts of trans fats and chemicals. The following examples are a few excellent recipes to try. Please call the office if you have any questions.

Preparing a bariatric friendly environment within your home is a very important aspect of eating well. How many times have we eaten something because it was the easy choice? The solution to this is to remove the temptation. Get rid of the unhealthy foods in your home, and replace them with healthy choices. A trigger food is one that you will eat in a time of stress, or after a hectic day, that is not the best choice. Set up your home for success. Begin to create a healthy environment now.

These recipes are also great for post-surgery, after you have been re-introduced to all solid foods following the recommended timeline.
Healthy Recipes

Ground Beef and Veggies

**Ingredients:**
1 lb lean ground meat  
1 large mushroom, chopped  
1/4 yellow onion, chopped  
5 carrots, thinly sliced  
1 large zucchini, chopped  
2 cloves garlic, finely chopped  
2 Tbsp coconut aminos, separated (coconut aminos taste like soy sauce but have no MSG)  
1 bunch of kale chopped into smaller pieces  
Optional: Add any other chopped veggies that you enjoy

**Directions:**
1. In a large pot, sauté onion and garlic, then add beef and cook until done.  
2. Once the meat is cooked through, remove it from the pot and set aside.  
3. Remove excess fat from the pan and then add your vegetables.  
4. Let them cook for a minute or two, then add enough water to completely cover the bottom of the pan. Let this boil off while stirring veggies. Once the water is almost gone, add coconut aminos and stir. All veggies should be tender.  
5. Add meat/onion/garlic mixture to the veggies and stir.  
6. Add the kale to the top of the meat/veggies, and cover. A slight bit more water may need to be added to steam the kale. The kale will steam to a softened texture within a couple of minutes.  
7. Make sure that you watch the veggie/meat mixture so that it does not burn on the bottom.
Healthy Recipes

Chicken with Coconut Cauliflower Rice

**Ingredients:**
- 2-3 lb chicken (*breast or thigh*)
- 1 Tbsp dried oregano
- 1 onion, minced
- 1 small green pepper, minced
- 3 garlic cloves, minced
- 8 ounces Andouille sausage (*sugar free sausage – difficult to find, but typically at stores like Whole Foods*).
- 4 ounces plus 1/4 cup chicken stock
- Cilantro, minced to taste
- Parsley, minced to taste
- Juice of 1 lime and its zest

**Coconut Cauliflower Rice:**
- 1 head cauliflower, to be riced (*Trader Joe’s has pre-cauliflower rice*)
- 1 cup shredded unsweetened coconut (*typically in a green bag – not the sweetened type*)
- 2 jalapenos, minced
- 1 tsp salt
- 4 Tbsp raisins
- 1/2 tsp cinnamon
- 1/2 tsp cardamom

**Directions:**
1. Trim and cube chicken into one inch chunks.
2. Boil chicken in stock pot for about 35-40 minutes, or until thoroughly cooked. Remove the chicken.
3. Cook the sausage in a pan and brown. Remove sausage, slice and reserve.
4. Add spices and return chicken and sausage back into the pan. Season with cilantro, parsley, and lime juice/zest.
5. To make the cauliflower rice: break the cauliflower into florets, removing the stems and “wrap” the pieces in a towel or put in a Ziploc baggie and smash them on your counter 10-12 times and you should have the perfect sized pieces). Another way to rice cauliflower is to break it into florets and place in your food processor and pulse for 10-15 seconds at a time.
6. Heat a large skillet and add a small amount of olive oil. Add the jalapenos, salt, raisins, coconut and bay leaf. Stir for 3-4 minutes. Add the riced cauliflower, cinnamon and cardamom. Sauté until the cauliflower is tender.
7. Plate with cauliflower and then place the chicken mixture on top.
Healthy Recipes

Meat & Spinach Muffins

**Ingredients:**
- 2 (16 ounce) bags of frozen chopped spinach, defrosted
- 1/2 medium onion, diced
- 2 eggs
- 1 1/2 lbs of lean ground meat
- 2 garlic cloves, minced

**Directions:**
1. Preheat the oven to 375 degrees.
2. Squeeze the excess water from the defrosted spinach. This is very important. Just take small amounts of the spinach into your hand and squeeze it hard until all of the water is out. You should have approximately 4 cups of spinach after all of the water is out.
3. Heat a large skillet over medium heat and add the coconut oil, and allow it to melt. Toss the onion and garlic into the pan. When that is cooked to a clear color, add the meat to crumble. Stir in spinach and heat through. Set aside.
4. Whisk eggs in a small bowl.
5. When the meat/spinach mixture is cooled, add eggs to the meat and blend well.
6. Place 12 muffin papers into a muffin pan. Pack the batter into a 1/2 cup measuring cup and then transfer it to the muffin pan - using your hands to pack it tightly into the cups. It should form slight mounds on top.
7. Bake for 35-40 minutes or until cooked through.
8. Let cool. These can be kept stored in the fridge for 6 days.
Healthy Recipes

Farmer’s Market Chicken Soup

Ingredients:
1 medium sweet potato, chopped
2 green onions (*can substitute with any onions*)
5 cloves garlic, chopped
3 lbs chicken
Salt, pepper, paprika and thyme to taste
3 carrots, peeled and chopped
3 parsnips, peeled and chopped
Parsley to taste
Dill to taste
8 cups of water or stock
1 bunch of kale

Directions:
1. Sauté onion and garlic over medium heat until clear and fragrant.
2. Rinse the chicken, pat dry, and place in pot.
3. Cover the chicken and veggies with water or stock (you can use half water and half broth if you would like).
4. Bring the pot to a rapid boil, then simmer covered over medium to low heat for 90 minutes (or longer is fine).
5. Take the chicken out of the pot, remove the skin and bones and add all the shredded meat back into the pot.
6. Break the kale into 1 inch pieces, add to the pot and cook for another 5 minutes until wilted.
Healthy Recipes

Sweet Potato Chili

Ingredients:
- 2 lbs lean ground meat (93% fat or less)
- 1 onion, diced
- 2 medium sweet potatoes, diced
- 1 green bell pepper, chopped
- 1 red bell pepper, chopped
- 1/2 cup carrots, chopped
- 1 small can diced organic tomatoes
- 1 large can crushed tomatoes
- 2 garlic cloves, minced
- 2 Tbsp olive oil
- 1 cup water
- 1 tsp sea salt
- 1 tsp black pepper

Directions:
1. Preheat the oven to 375.
2. Place sweet potatoes and carrots on a baking sheet and drizzle with small amount of olive oil. Roast for 20-30 minutes until pieces are soft.
3. While veggies are roasting, sauté onion, garlic and bell peppers in a pan with a small amount of olive oil until soft.
4. Add meat to the pot, crumbling into small pieces, then add dry spices and sauté until meat is cooked through and no longer pink.
5. Add the tomatoes, and water to the pot and bring to a simmer.
6. As soon as the roasting veggies are soft, remove from the oven and add to the simmering chili. Continue to simmer covered pot for 1 hour.
7. Serve with guacamole or sliced avocado.
Healthy Recipes

Salmon Cakes

Ingredients:
- 3 cans boneless, skinless salmon
- 3/4 can pureed sweet potatoes (or you can bake and mash about 3/4 cups)
- 1 egg
- 1 tsp dried dill
- 1 tsp paprika
- 1/2 cup almond flour (this can be omitted if you would like – your salmon cakes will just not stay together as well)

Directions:
1. Preheat oven to 400 degrees.
2. Line parchment paper on a cookie sheet (or spray with non-stick spray).
3. Scoop 1/3 cup of the mixture onto the paper and spread out into a patty.
4. Bake 20 minutes on one side and flip over and bake an additional 10 minutes. Let them get a little crispy on the outside if you like.

Chicken Hash Yum!

Ingredients:
- 2 lbs boneless skinless chicken
- 1 green apple, sliced
- 1 sweet potato, shredded
- 1/4 cup crushed walnuts
- Raw spinach

Directions:
5. Boil chicken in water until cooked (approximately 30-40 minutes)
6. In a different pot, cook sweet potato and apple in a small amount of water (so the water is basically steaming the potato and apple).
7. When the chicken is finished, take it out of the water and shred with a fork.
8. Add the chicken to the sweet potato and apple mixture and sprinkle with walnuts.
9. Serve on top of a bed of spinach. Season with salt and pepper if desired.
Guide to Bariatric Success

Moving Your Body
Exercise Guidelines for Before and After Bariatric Surgery

Pre-Operative Exercise Routines:

As you prepare for surgery, it’s time to start paying extra attention to your physical activity. You may have aching joints, sore muscles, and difficulty with your breathing due to asthma or other issues that prevent you from “doing a workout”. Focusing on getting your body moving is a great place to start. Moving your body and elevating your heart rate for 30-45 minutes a day will be beneficial to your lifelong health and for your post-operative recovery period.

Elevating your heart rate does not require you to go to the gym or hike a mountain. It is important to get into the habit of moving your body in a way that you can feel your heart beating faster than your resting heart rate. It does not have to be all at one time – you can spread it throughout the day as you see fit. Try walking to the mailbox instead of driving up to it, or parking a little further from the entrance at the store and then increase your distance each time you go.

Some suggestions to making exercise a part of your everyday life:

1. Choose a time of day that works for you. Many people say they do not have the time to exercise, but your health is very important - just as important as all of the other things that you do each day. Push yourself to get up and go for a walk in the morning even though it may be hard to get up early. It may take a few days, but you will have more energy each day that you do this, especially if you can make it an everyday habit. Sometimes it is a lot easier to get up before work/school/daily activities and get the exercise in so that you don’t find excuses later in the day.

2. Wear comfortable clothes and shoes.

3. Listen to fun upbeat music.

4. Change up your exercise. This keeps your body using different muscles, and your heart pumping at different rates. It also helps so that you don’t get bored and want to stop being active.

5. Set realistic goals and don’t get frustrated. Our bodies will adjust to new activities, but sometimes it is a slow progression. Do not perform exercises if they cause you pain. Work into it gradually. Always check with your healthcare provider if needed.

6. If you feel tired - don’t give up. Your energy will improve each day. Don’t forget that exercise also improves the quality of your sleep.

7. Exercise is not a contest - do not compare yourself to others. Work at your own pace. Start slowly and gradually increase your duration and intensity.

EXERCISE TIP:

Try water walking. If you have access to a pool, water walking is an excellent way to increase your heart rate while building lean muscle.

Water has 12% more resistance than air so when you walk in the water you are getting much more exercise (heart and muscle) than walking on land.
Exercise Guidelines for Before and After Bariatric Surgery

Post-Operative Exercise Suggestions:

Once you return home from surgery, it is important that you continue to get up and walk regularly. You should be up and moving for 10 minutes out of every hour. This is very important for several reasons; by moving air in and out of your lungs it helps to keep them functioning at their optimal level. It also helps to prevent respiratory infections, like pneumonia. Exercise will also help prevent blood clots from forming in your legs by helping blood circulate more efficiently throughout your body. At this stage it is not about exercise, but simply moving frequently.

During the first two weeks after surgery the only exercise you should be doing is moving every hour.

Getting out of bed after surgery can be tricky. It is important that you use your arms and legs to get up and avoid using your abdomen. When getting out of bed it helps to roll onto your side and keep your knees together while putting your hands on the side of the bed in front of you, then raise your body off the bed by using your hands to help push you up. Keep your back straight and move as one unit, swing your legs to the floor. From this position, you can push yourself to standing.

Using the stairs should not be a problem after surgery. Take it slowly and go up or down one stair at a time. If you are using the railing, do not pull yourself up as this could strain the abdominal muscles. Just move up or down the stairs in a slow controlled manner.

Exercise is an important part of your journey. Immediately after surgery, you should be up and moving but you need time to allow your body and the surgical incisions to heal. Once the healing period is complete we encourage you to go beyond simply being active. As you know, there are many tools to help with your weight loss after bariatric surgery. Exercise not only helps with weight loss and maintenance of weight loss, but it also helps with some of the emotional aspects that you can expect from weight loss and lifestyle changes. During and after exercise people report a feeling of wellbeing and happiness due to hormones released by the brain. Some patients may feel scared to exercise after surgery. Take it slowly, but the most successful weight loss involves exercise. Incorporating exercise into your life each day will make it part of your daily routine and that is important for success. The patients that have the greatest success with weight loss and maintaining the loss, are the ones that really learn to love exercise. After you are cleared by Dr. Brown to add new exercises, experiment and try a variety. We recommend yoga, tai chi, water exercise (walking, water aerobics or swimming laps), Zumba, gym classes with weights and cardio, hiking and bike riding. Try new things and you may be surprised how much you love them.

There are some great programs out there that will help you stay on track if you are having difficulty on your own. The YMCA’s Healthy Life Center is geared for bariatric patients. If you would like more information, or to make a free, non-committal appointment call Vicki at 208-344-5502 extension 217. She is happy to chat with you, at no cost, regarding your goals with exercise and weight loss.
Guide to Bariatric Success

Post-Operative Nutrition
Food Choices Post Surgery

The New Life Nutrition Plan Stage 1 is a clear liquid diet which will begin immediately after your surgery and continue until you leave the hospital.

The Stage 1 Plan includes sugar free Jell-O, sugar free popsicles, clear broth, and water. The floor staff will provide you with as many clear liquids as you would like. Please feel free to ask for popsicles, water, ice, or any other clear liquids that sound good. It will not be possible for you to drink more than a sip or two at a time. Therefore, it is important to sip on your water every 3-5 minutes.

The New Life Nutrition Plan Stage 2 will begin when you leave the hospital. This is the eating plan that you will stay on for weeks 1, 2 and 3. These specific nutritional guidelines, which include foods that are very smooth in consistency, are important, as it allows your new gastrointestinal system to heal.

- Food choices: Broth, sugar free Jell-O, sugar free popsicles.
- Beverage choices: water, sugar free liquids, and Crystal Lite.
- 2-4 protein shakes (You need 60-80 grams of protein per day - so the number of shakes per day is dependent on what shake you are drinking). Choose protein supplements with at least 20 grams of protein and less than 10 grams of carbohydrates per serving.
- Whey protein isolate is absorbed best so look for a protein drink or protein powder that has this protein source if possible. You can purchase pre-mixed protein drinks or you can purchase a powder and mix it with water. If you feel that it has a gritty consistency, you can use your blender to mix it well.
- Avoid any carbonated, caffeinated, or alcoholic beverages. Alcoholic beverages should be avoided for at least one year after surgery. Alcohol is typically absorbed 3 times faster after surgery than prior to surgery.
- Continue to track fluid and food intake. You should make sure that you continue to drink at least 64 ounces of fluids per day. As you know by now it is very important to sip small amounts throughout the day. Have a water bottle with you at all times and make sure you take a sip every 3-5 minutes. This will allow you to get in the 64 ounces needed to maintain hydration. At least half of the fluid (32 ounces) should be from water and the other half can be from sugar free, carbonation free, alcohol free and caffeine free beverages. Water is the best choice.
Food Choices Post Surgery

You will start your New Life Nutrition Plan Stage 3 at week 4 and continue on that for weeks 5 and 6.

Remember that the stomach and intestines have to heal fully before regular food can pass through them. We have set up some food guidelines to help prevent blockages, vomiting or other problems. It is important to start slowly when adding new foods. Add only one new food at a time to make sure that your system is able to tolerate it without difficulty.

Soft foods are easy to digest. Below is a list of suggested of foods to enjoy and foods to avoid:

- Eggs: enjoy scrambled, soft or hard cooked eggs and egg salad. Avoid fried eggs
- Cheese: enjoy cottage cheese, string cheese and other soft cheeses.
- Yogurt: enjoy Greek Yogurt.
- Starches: Avoid oatmeal, cereals, breads, potatoes, crackers, tortillas, rice and pastas.
- Sweeteners: Add Truvia, Stevia and Splenda if needed. Avoid sugar, honey, corn syrup, and other artificial sweeteners.
- Fats: Make sure to add in good fats. Good fats include: avocado, coconut oil, olive oil
- Protein supplements: whey, egg and soy based supplements.
New Life Nutrition Plan Stage 4

At week 7, you will transition from stage 3 to food choices that you will eat for the remainder of your life.

It is okay to stop your protein supplement/shakes if you are now eating the required 60-80 mg of protein at meal and snack times.

Listen to your body when eating – stop before you are full. It often takes a while longer for your brain to tell you that your belly is full. If you keep eating, you may end up being uncomfortable or even vomiting.

Each meal should be 4-6 ounces (having a food scale is a great idea), which is approximately 3/4 of a cup. You can gradually increase your meal size to 6-8 ounces at a time at about 6 months post-surgery.

Try to eat meals that incorporate all food groups. This will help ensure that your body is getting the nutrients that it needs and you will not get bored with your food choices. Try to incorporate colorful veggies at every meal. Each vegetable has different nutrients and its own distinct combination of vitamins.

Eating whole foods and getting rid of processed foods is an important key to maintaining weight loss and keeping your cells healthy. It may seem like more work and an increased cost to eat healthy, but in the long run it is worth it.

Planning and preparing meals is the most important thing you can do to stay on track with your healthy eating.

Eat slowly; it should take 30 minutes to eat your meal. Remember that you need to chew all of the food that you eat into the consistency of applesauce. Chew each bite 40-50 times, and put your utensil down between bites.

Do not drink with your meals and for 30 minutes after you are finished eating. Drinking with your meals encourages your food to be digested more quickly and therefore you will feel hungry again sooner.
Resources for Weight Loss Success

Below is a guide to your new food choices:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Food Group</th>
<th>Recommended Options</th>
<th>Foods to Avoid</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Meat</strong></td>
<td>Moist chicken, turkey, ham, pork, or lean beef</td>
<td>Dry meat or poultry</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Dairy</strong></td>
<td>Cottage cheese and string cheese</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Fruit</strong></td>
<td>Keep to one serving per day</td>
<td>Avoid seeds/peels</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Vegetables</strong></td>
<td>Try a variety – just chew well</td>
<td>Iceberg lettuce, corn, fibrous veggies like celery</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Starches</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td>Cereals, breads, crackers, rice, pasta, tortillas, and chips</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Sweeteners</strong></td>
<td>Equal, Sweet-n-Low, Stevia, Splenda</td>
<td>Sugar, honey, corn syrup, molasses</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Fats</strong></td>
<td>(moderate) Best fats are coconut oil, olive oil, avocado oil, nuts and eggs.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Beverages</strong></td>
<td>WATER! May have caffeine free, carbonation free, sugar free beverages (be mindful of artificial sweeteners)</td>
<td>All forms of alcohol.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Spices</strong></td>
<td>All mild herbs and spices</td>
<td>Be careful with ketchup and sauces with added sugars</td>
</tr>
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