

Weight loss maintenance following bariatric surgery: **Practical Tips**

After bariatric surgery, you will experience early rapid weight loss. Following this phase, 12 to 18 months later, there are some simple things you can do to help stabilise your weight. Please note that most people drop to their lowest weight, and then put a few kilograms back on before weight stabilises significantly below your pre-surgery weight.

It is a good idea to monitor yourself, and set a weight range you are comfortable with. If your weight increases by 3kg or more, you will need to take action to get back to your preferred weight. The longer you leave it before taking action, the harder it will be to maintain your preferred weight.

Think about your pattern of eating, has it changed? Going back to using a food diary for a week or so, and noticing not just what you eat, but when you eat and what you are feeling at the time may help.

"Are you eating when bored?"

*"Are you snacking while watching TV?"
(mindless eating)*

*"Are you craving certain foods like carbohydrates when stressed?"
(emotional eating)*

*"Are you eating larger amounts beyond the point of fullness, or till you vomit?"
(binge eating)*

If you noticed these patterns of eating before you had bariatric surgery, and find you are slipping back into them try to use any techniques that you were shown by your therapists to manage them. Stress management techniques can be very useful. Often just identifying the pattern allows you to get back on track. Don't worry, it is normal for people to get off track along the way. Be kind to yourself, and drop the self blame. If you are struggling, contact your local healthcare professional or bariatric surgery centre for advice.

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Resources:

European Association for the Study of Obesity (EASO) website (Covid-19 patient resources: energy intake, resilience and mental health, hydration, staying home indoor exercises) www.easo.org

Be Active Stay Healthy. British Obesity and Metabolic Surgery Society Website. Video suitable for most patients post-bariatric surgery. www.bomss.org.uk/be-active-stay-healthy

Obesity UK is the leading charity dedicated to supporting people living with obesity. This offers Weight Loss Surgery Info (Wtinfo) support groups in the UK, and links to resources. www.obesityuk.org.uk

Living with Bariatric Surgery. Book by Dr Denise Ratcliffe. Routledge www.drdeniseratcliffe.co.uk/bariatric-surgery

Hydration for Health mission is to raise public awareness of healthy hydration, and encourage sustainable healthy hydration habits. This means making sure that people drink enough fluids and their bodies maintain water balance. It has a useful calculator which you can use to check if you drinking enough fluids. www.hydrateforhealth.com/en/hydration-tools/hydration-calculator

References:

Postoperative Behavioral Variables and Weight Change 3 Years After Bariatric Surgery. James E. Mitchell, Nicholas J. Christian, David R. Fium, Alfons Pomp, Walter J. Porjes, Bruce M. Wolfe, Anita P. Courcoulas, Steven H. Belle. JAMA Surg. 2016;151(8):752-757. doi:10.1001/jamasurg.2016.0395

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