Weight Loss Surgery
Specializing in laparoscopic bariatric surgery

Vitamins and Minerals

It is very important to take your vitamins after surgery for life. You are at risk of nutrient deficiencies because you are eating less food and your body now absorbs and processes food differently. **Start your vitamins at week 3 after surgery.**

<u>One week</u> before your surgery, we will fax your vitamin prescriptions to your pharmacy. We strongly recommend you start on *these* prescribed vitamins after surgery, rather than buying supplements online on your own. The doses and types of vitamins are very precise. At your 1-month appointment, you can let us know which vitamins you don't like.

Tips for taking your vitamins to optimize their absorption:

- Space your iron 2 hours away from your calcium and multivitamin.
- Don't take your iron at the same time as heartburn medications.
- If you take levothyroxine (Synthroid) for your thyroid, take it 4 hours away from your calcium.

See our other handout on vitamins on the Resources page for example schedules of how to take your vitamins and for other brands of vitamins.

Life-long blood tests:

- It is recommended to do bariatric blood work at 6 months, 12 months, and then annually life-long after surgery with your family doctor or with a private doctor.
- Most patients don't develop deficiencies until after 6-12 months, so please continue annual blood work even if your results are normal in the beginning!
- **Your doctor might not be aware of bariatric specific nutrition blood work. Here is what they should be testing to monitor your vitamins:**
    - **Sleeve gastrectomy:** CBC, electrolytes, albumin, ferritin, vitamin B12, folic acid, calcium, vitamin D 25(OH), PTH (to screen for calcium deficiency)
    - **Gastric bypass:** CBC, electrolytes, albumin, ferritin, vitamin B12, folic acid, calcium, vitamin D 25(OH), PTH (to screen for calcium deficiency), vitamin A, zinc, copper
    - **Other things your doctor might want to test for general health:** Differential counts for CBC, BUN, Creatinine, Random blood glucose, Liver profile (Total bilirubin, ALP, ALT), TSH (if you had hypothyroidism before surgery).

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Vitamin or Mineral	Sleeve gastrectomy	Gastric Bypass
Multivitamin *****Avoid gummy multivitamins. They are missing many nutrients.**	**1-2 pills per day** - Avoid taking within 2 hours of iron and calcium - Ideally do not take the pills at the same time. - Choose a multivitamin with the following: ○ Minimum 1.2 mg of thiamin (vitamin B1) ○ Minimum 400 mcg of folate (do not exceed 1000 mcg of folate/day unless pregnant as high doses can hide a vitamin B12 deficiency) ○ Minimum 8 mg of zinc ○ Minimum 1 mg of copper ○ Some amount of vitamin E, vitamin K, selenium and magnesium	**2 pills per day** - Avoid taking within 2 hours of iron and calcium - Ideally do not take the pills at the same time. - Choose a multivitamin with the following: ○ Minimum 1.2 mg of thiamin (vitamin B1) ○ Minimum 400 mcg of folate (do not exceed 1000 mcg of folate/day unless pregnant as high doses can hide a vitamin B12 deficiency) ○ Minimum 8 mg of zinc ○ Minimum 1 mg of copper ○ Some amount of vitamin E, vitamin K, selenium and magnesium
Calcium	**Total daily needs = 1200-1500 mg per day (from food and supplements)** - Look for: calcium citrate NOT carbonate (You need a lot of stomach acid to absorb calcium carbonate. With your new small stomach, you have significantly less stomach acid.) - Avoid taking within 2 hours of iron and multivitamin - Ideally doses should be divided into 500 mg doses	**Total daily needs = 1200-1500 mg per day (from food and supplements)** - Look for: calcium citrate NOT carbonate (You need a lot of stomach acid to absorb calcium carbonate. With your new small stomach, you have significantly less stomach acid.) - Avoid taking within 2 hours of iron and multivitamin - Ideally doses should be divided into 500 mg doses
Vitamin D	**Total daily needs = 2000-3000 IU per day** - Look for: D3 (cholecalciferol) - Account for the vitamin D in your multivitamin	**Total daily needs = 2000-3000 IU per day** - Look for: D3 (cholecalciferol) - Account for the vitamin D in your multivitamin
Vitamin B12	**Total daily needs = 350-1000 mcg per day** - Account for the vitamin B12 in your multivitamin	**Total daily needs = 350-1000 mcg per day** - Account for the vitamin B12 in your multivitamin

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Iron	**Take ONLY if you are menstruating or if you have a history of low iron.** **If you are not taking an iron supplement, make sure your multivitamin has at least 10 mg of iron.** **Total daily needs = 45-60 mg of elemental iron per day** - Look for: ferrous sulphate (preferred), ferrous fumarate (palafer) or ferrous gluconate - Account for the iron in your multivitamin - Avoid taking within 2 hours of calcium and multivitamin - Take on an empty stomach if no discomfort NOTE: Our prescription states to take your iron every other day.	**Iron supplement is recommended.** **Total daily needs = 45-60 mg of elemental iron per day** - Look for: ferrous sulphate (preferred), ferrous fumarate (palafer) or ferrous gluconate - Account for the iron in your multivitamin - Avoid taking within 2 hours of calcium and multivitamin - Take on an empty stomach if no discomfort NOTE: Our prescription states to take your iron every other day. **Note:** Feramax is not recommended after the gastric bypass because it is absorbed in the duodenum (the part of your intestines that is now 'bypassed').

Before buying supplements online or changing brands of vitamins, speak with your nurse or dietitian.
The doses and types of vitamins we recommend are very precise.

Lastly, it is always recommended to review your blood work yourself when possible.

For residents of Quebec, you can view your blood tests by creating an account with the Quebec Health Booklet here - https://www.quebec.ca/en/health/your-health-information/quebec-health-booklet

For other provinces, ask your family doctor for a copy of your results or ask if there is a patient portal to view your results yourself.

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