

Preparation for Weight Loss Surgery

Now that you have decided to proceed with weight loss surgery, here are some steps you can take to expedite your surgery, reduce the risk of complications from surgery and increase the chances of good long-term weight loss results.

- **Smoking.** If you smoke, stop smoking completely. You have to stop smoking for at least one month before gastric bypass surgery.
- **Exercise.** Start exercising on a regular basis. If you cannot join a gym or you are unable to do cardiovascular exercises, you can simply start walking on a regular basis. If you have not been exercising before, start with only a few minutes and build up gradually. Another option is to join water aerobics at a local YMCA. **We recommend 30 minutes of exercise daily.** If you don't already use a pedometer, we recommend that you buy one and use it everyday. Keep a log of the steps you walk daily and bring it with you.
- **Diet.** For good long term weight loss, you will need to change your diet. Start paying close attention to the number of calories and the amount of fat in everything you eat.

*Stick to 3 meals a day with no snacks in between. People who continue to snack after weight loss surgery, end up losing less weight in the long term.

* It is important to eat at least 3 meals a day. Less than three meals is counterproductive, because when you miss a meal, you crave unhealthy food before the next meal.

*If you drink regular soda or other beverages with a lot of calories, change to diet forms of those beverages. If you drink regular milk, switch to skim milk.

- **Medications.** Birth control pills increase the risk of blood clots in the veins of the legs and pelvis. Birth control pills should be stopped at least a month before surgery and replaced with a barrier method of birth control.

* It is also important to remember that female patients should not get pregnant for **18 months** after weight loss surgery. Therefore continue to practice barrier methods of birth control for that duration.

* Aspirin, Advil, Motrin, Ibuprofen and similar painkillers (NSAID class of drugs) can interfere with blood clotting and cause excessive bleeding after surgery. They should be stopped at least 1 week before surgery.

*That also applies to a lot of natural medicines and herbal products. Including St Johns Wort, Gensing, Biloba and Vitamin E, etc.

*After surgery, NSAIDS can irritate the stomach pouch and should be avoided if possible. Tylenol and newer pain medications including celebrex and bextra are probably better alternatives for pain.

* On the other hand if you have decided to proceed with weight loss surgery, you should start taking **one multivitamin tablet** once a day and one serving of **Designer Whey Protein Powder** once a day. You can mix the powder with 1 to 2 oz. of skim milk and drink it.

- **Awareness about Weight Loss Surgery.** Weight loss surgery is a major operation. Although the risks of surgery have decreased over time, it is still not without risks. This surgery is not meant for those who are not sure if they can follow the **strict dietary** and **lifestyle** changes after surgery. You can not try this surgery for a few months and get the operation reversed if you don't like the new way of eating. Therefore it is very important to read about the surgery and be very well informed. Here are two recommended books:
 - ❖ **Weight Loss Surgery. Finding the Thin Person Inside You.** Author Barbara. Thompson. The book costs \$18.95. Tele # 877-440-1518 .website www.wlscenter.com
 - ❖ **The Doctor's Guide to Weight Loss Surgery. How to make the Decision that Could Save Your Life.** Tel # 877-wlsguide. Website www.wlsguide.com
 - ❖ **Laparoscopic Adjustable Gastric Banding, Achieving Permanent Weight Loss With Minimally Invasive Surgery.** Author Jessie H. Ahroni ISBN # 0-595-31114-8 51395. Available at Barnes & Noble Book Stores.
- **Support Group Meetings.** Surgical weight loss support group meetings are an excellent source of information about weight loss surgery. These meetings are attended by people who are considering weight loss surgery or had weight loss surgery in the past. Weight Loss Surgery Support Group Meetings are held at Hamot Heart Institute the **first and third Wednesdays of every month at 6:30pm** in the conference room.
We will be adding a support group meeting for patients interested in Lap-Band soon. Please check with the office for more details.
- **You have to attend at least one support group meeting before surgery.** You should continue to attend these meetings for at least one year after surgery. Please call 814-877-6997 for more information and future support group meetings.

It is important to remember that patients have to be prepared physically, mentally and psychologically before weight loss surgery can be offered. Both, your preparation and insurance approval are required before the operation can be scheduled.

