



# Before Bariatric Surgery: Things to Think About

Gastric bypass surgery creates a much smaller stomach. Your new stomach is like a pouch. It is about the size of an egg. This very small pouch is a built-in way to limit your food intake. The reduced food intake will lead to rapid weight loss during the first few weeks and months following surgery.



Constant overeating can stretch the pouch and undo the effects of the surgery. Frequent snacking on high calorie foods and liquids can defeat weight loss efforts as well. It is important to start new, healthier eating habits now so they become a permanent part of your lifestyle.



Many patients find they are regaining weight about 6 months or more after the surgery. Some people regain most or all of the weight they lost. This is unfortunate. But starting healthier eating and exercise habits now can prevent it. After you recover from your surgery, you will need to continue these healthy habits. These healthier habits should become part of your lifestyle. The surgery itself is just a “tool” to help you get started on your new healthier life.

You will begin by having only sips of water, then a liquid diet. Next, you will eat a pureed or blenderized diet. A soft diet might also be recommended before you can eat regular foods.

Most people eat regular foods within a few weeks to a few months after the surgery, but this varies from person to person. Talk with your doctor or dietitian about your diet. Don't rush moving forward. If you experience a large amount of vomiting after trying a new texture, go back to what you were eating before. Wait a few days then try the new food and texture again.

Your dietitian can help you with these issues.

**Contact your local VA Dietitian for more information.**

