

Staying Healthy After Weight Loss Surgery

Follow the tips below to stay healthy after your surgery.

If you have any questions, please call your surgeon's office to confirm your instructions

Problem	What to do
Hydration Signs that you're not drinking enough water: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dry mouth • Not peeing very much or very often • Dark or amber colored urine (pee) • Fast heartbeat • Low blood pressure • Dizziness 	<p>To stay hydrated:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Try to sip 2 to 3 ounces (oz) of water each hour • Only take sips and small swallows. No gulping or guzzling. • Aim for between 48 to 64 oz per day (3 ounces of water an hour x 16 hours awake) = 48 oz <p>If your symptoms continue even after trying these suggestions, please call your surgeon's office.</p>
Pain <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Keep incisions dry for 48 hours after surgery. • Do not take a bath, go swimming, or sit in a hot tub for 2 to 3 weeks, or until your incisions are healed and your surgeon tells you it's okay to do these activities. • Look for signs of infection at the surgical site: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Swelling ○ Heat ○ Redness ○ Drainage ○ Foul odor ○ Fever of 101.5 °F (38.6 °C) or higher. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use the non-opioid medication prescribed by your surgeon. Examples include acetaminophen (Tylenol, others), gabapentin (Gralise, Horizant, Neuraptine), and celecoxib (Celebrex – be sure to take omeprazole [Prilosec] 30 minutes prior to using). • Recommended: Take 1000 mg of acetaminophen every 8 hours unless you have an allergy or another medical reason for not taking it. Do not take if you are using a prescribed opioid that contains acetaminophen (example: Percocet, Roxicet, Vicodin, Lorcet, or Lortab). • Refer to the pain management guide given to you before your surgery. If the pain is above your pain goal, use the prescribed opioid medication. • Manage pain without medication with these suggestions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Distractions, such as tv or music – Ice the surgical site – Brace your incisions with pillows – Walking – Guided imagery – Deep breathing and meditation. – Massage or acupressure – Aromatherapy – Spiritual or emotional counseling <p>If your pain doesn't get better even after trying these things, call your surgeon's office.</p> <p>Watch for signs of constipation and treat as noted in the MAWDS packet or call your surgeon's office for further instruction.</p>
Gas pain CO ₂ (carbon dioxide) is used to inflate the abdominal cavity (belly) during surgery. The CO ₂ may rise and settle in the shoulders, chest, or back, causing aches or pains.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Walking or movement will help get rid of the CO₂. Note if the pain lessens when you burp, pass gas, or walk. • Try placing a heating pad on your upper back and shoulders. • Use the incentive spirometer hourly. • Try chewable Gas-X to relieve pain. Opioid pain medications are not likely to help with gas pain. • Pay attention to other symptoms associated with the pain and how you feel so you can tell your surgeon. <p>If gas pain worsens or becomes too severe, call your surgeon's office.</p>

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Nausea / Vomiting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use prescription nausea medication or an over-the-counter antacid like chewable Tums or Maalox at least 30 minutes before you eat. • Introduce one new food at a time. • Drink room temperature liquids. • Try sipping broth. • Sip liquids slowly. • Keep water and food separate. • Avoid water 30 minutes before and after meals. • Chew each bite 20 to 30 times before swallowing. • Avoid acidic food and food not on the permitted list (OJ, tomato, etc.) • Make note of the food or medicine that upset your stomach in your food journal. Reintroduce the food 2 to 3 weeks later. • Apply cold cloth to the base of neck and forehead. <p>If you continue to feel nausea or can't stop vomiting, call your surgeon's office.</p>
Activity Feeling dizzy or out of breath. May be caused by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pain medications • Dehydration 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Take short walks (3 to 5 minutes) at least 4 to 5 times daily. Walking will help prevent blood clots and help you heal better. • Increase your level of activity if you continue to feel okay. Ask your surgeon about starting an exercise regimen at your follow up appointment. • Add one electrolyte per day as needed. Example: One 8-oz sugar free Gatorade. • Drink at least 32 oz of water per day and that you can eat. At least 75% of what you are eating should be foods that are high in protein (7g or more per serving). • Check and record your blood pressure and blood sugar at regular intervals. <p>Notify your surgeon's office if you continue to feel dizzy when standing or if you are easily out of breath.</p>
Nutrition Pain upon eating. Unable to eat or keep food down.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Eat 3 times daily. • Eat slowly for over 20 to 30 minutes. Chew each bite 20 to 30 times. • Avoid drinking water 30 minutes before or after meals. • Don't eat more than the maximum recommended portion. You can eat less if the food is not well tolerated. • Only eat one food one at a time. Follow your guidelines on adding new foods. Go back to the prior stage of dietary recommendations for a couple of days if you're not tolerating the current stage. • Chewable Gas-X may help with gas or gas pain <p>Update your surgeon on your diet progression at your follow up appointments.</p>
Bowel Movements (poops) Your first bowel movements (BM) may not come for a few days. It may be watery and dark in color and have a strong odor. You should return to the normal BM routine of at least one a day or every couple of days (aim for daily). Iron supplements may cause the dark color to continue.	<p>For healthy BMs:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stay hydrated and ambulate often. • Sip on warm (as tolerated) non-caffeinated drinks or Smooth Move or Senna tea. If your BMs cause nausea, try using peppermint Smooth Move tea. <p>If constipated (no BMs): May use Benefiber in water and sip on it throughout the day. Other options include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Milk of Magnesia-liquid or chewable • MiraLAX 1 oz twice a day <p>Avoid Metamucil or Citrucel as they expand in the stomach.</p> <p>If you are still unable to have a BM, please contact your surgeon's office.</p> <p>All products mentioned above can be purchased at most grocery stores.</p>

Problem	What to do
Pulmonary (Lungs) Pain, cough, or discomfort in lower lungs when breathing.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do your incentive spirometry 10 times each hour until lung or belly pain is minimal and you are breathing at normal lung capacity. • Take small walks often. • Take deep breaths and cough frequently. For pain with deep breaths: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Brace your incisions with a pillow. This helps your belly and lungs absorb the pain or pressure of the cough. If pain worsens or you are short of breath, contact your surgeon's office.
GERD or Acid Reflux <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Heartburn • Indigestion • Pain or burning in the throat • Difficulty swallowing 	Take an over-the-counter proton pump inhibitor (Prilosec, Prevacid, Nexium) prescribed medication if indicated) If a proton pump inhibitor does not work, call your surgeon's office.
Dizziness Mild dizziness or weakness may be caused by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Anesthesia from surgery • Pain medications • Eating and drinking less • Low blood pressure • Low blood sugar 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Drink 2 to 3 ounces of water each hour. • Eat at regular intervals 3 times a day. • Check your blood pressure, heart rate, and blood sugar before taking any medications. • Try no-calorie Gatorade or Powerade. • Rule out dehydration, low or high blood sugar, or low energy from low food intake. If you are on blood pressure medication, check your BP. If low, contact your prescribing physician for possible dosage change.

WHEN TO GET HELP

- Call your surgeon's office if you have a fever of 101.5 °F (38.6 °C) or higher or have any of the problems noted above.
- Seek immediate medical attention if you have chest pain or shortness of breath.

Contact information:

- **LDS Hospital:** Rocky Mountain Associated Physicians – 801-268-3800, or the Bariatric Medicine Institute – 801-746-2885
- **St. George Regional Hospital:** Utah Surgical Associates – 435-628-1641
- **Cassia Regional Hospital:** Intermountain Cassia Surgical Clinic – 208-677-6266
- **Sevier Valley Hospital:** Intermountain Sevier Surgical Clinic – 435-893-4100
- **Utah Valley Hospital:** Utah Surgical Associates – 801-852-3460

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