

WEIGHT GAIN AFTER BARIATRIC SURGERY?

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Bariatric surgery can be life-changing, but did you know that it's not a fool-proof/guaranteed solution to long-term weight loss? Most patients are shocked when they hear this for the first time as more often than not, they are under the impression that undergoing major surgery and/or paying out thousands of pounds means that any subsequent weight loss is permanent. This unfortunately is far from true, as we will now explore.

When we meet patients pre-operatively, we make sure to explain to them that although weight loss surgery is a huge push in the right direction, and it has the potential to help elicit a vast amount of weight loss, it CAN be overridden. Following surgery, a calorie is still a calorie, and after the initial few weeks spent transitioning from liquid through to pureed and finally normal textures have been and gone, patients often find themselves being able to tolerate high calorie foods such as biscuits, chocolate and crisps very easily.

Weight loss surgery will only work long term if you work with it, and it works best with NORMAL textured whole-foods i.e. meats, fish, vegetarian proteins such as beans and lentils, whole-grains, vegetables, salad and fruit. Of course these foods should be cooked well and eaten appropriately, i.e. chewed adequately with only small bites at a time, but ultimately very few whole-foods should be 'off limits' for good; some patients may struggle life-long with foods such as doughy breads and chewy meats such as steak.

Many patients talk about their pouch (new smaller stomach) becoming 'stretched', due to being able to eat more than they did immediately after surgery. This is partly normal, as after surgery the stomach is swollen due to an increased blood supply helping it to heal. Overstretching of the stomach though can be avoided by limiting the consumption of fizzy drinks and not overeating; this is one reason why we recommend patients eat from a tea-plate life long.

We do not recommend 'pouch test' or 'reset' diets, as they are simply unnecessary and are no more effective than a healthy, balanced and calorie controlled diet; you don't need to calorie count but you do need to be calorie aware.

Aside from an increase in portion sizes, the most common causes of weight re-gain that we see as dietitians, particularly after the initial and rapid weight loss experienced in the first 12 months, are increased consumption of alcohol and, as previously mentioned, easy to eat, high calorie foods such as biscuits, sweets and chocolate. You must remain vigilant throughout your weight loss and weight loss maintenance journey and ensure that foods and drinks such as these do not creep in to your diet too frequently.

Keep an eye on your weight weekly and consider keeping a food diary for one week a month to keep you accountable. On top of this, make sure that your home environment is conducive to weight loss maintenance too i.e. keep high calorie, palatable foods either out of the home altogether or in a hard to reach, inconvenient location i.e. not next to the kettle!

This article isn't meant to scare you, it's meant to keep your eyes open and hopefully prevent your hard work from going to waste; there are so many wonderful weight loss stories following bariatric surgery and we want YOU to be one of them 5 as well as 10 years on!

FOR FURTHER SUPPORT

Bariatric Cookery: [Website](#)

The Gastric Guru: [Website](#)