



# Nutrition Education and Support for Surgery

Bariatric surgery will reduce the volume of food consumed, however it won't necessarily improve the quality of food or help with your compliance to recommended supplements. Nutrition care and food choices are important lifelong considerations. Engaging with a bariatric dietitian team, maximises the benefits and health outcomes for pre and post surgery through ongoing monitoring of nutritional status, prevention of nutrient deficiencies and maximising long term weight loss.

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*Rely on us for expert nutrition advice.*

## Nutrition Education and Support for Surgery

Undergoing bariatric surgery is just one part of the journey to assist you in losing weight and regaining health, fitness and quality of life. In preparation for surgery and afterwards you will need to learn how to use a variety of new skills and eat in a new way to get the optimum benefit and achieve a new way of life. For this reason, you need a team of different health professionals working with you to achieve your best results.

*Your dietitian will form an essential part of your weight loss journey, providing nutrition education, advice, motivation and support both pre and post surgery.*

Optimum Intake Dietitians will provide you with dietary education on how to change not only what, but how you eat and how to achieve optimum nourishment for your body as you transition through this process. Although some eating changes can sound simple, in reality, breaking years of eating habits can be hard and your team is there to support you through both the successes and the set backs along the way. From experience we have found that this support and education is fundamental to long-term success with bariatric surgery.

### Dietitian - Laura See

Our Dietitian Laura See is an Accredited Practising Dietitian, a member of the Dietitian's Association of Australia and an associate member of the Australian and New Zealand Metabolic and Obesity Surgery Society. She graduated with a Bachelor of Nutrition and Dietetics for the University of Newcastle. Laura had been providing nutrition counselling services in private practice before joining Optimum Intake Dietitians in 2019. She is actively involved in continual professional development in the area of bariatric surgery, supporting individuals through the surgical journey from pre-operative nutrition assessments, ongoing nutritional management and helping clients post-surgery with changing eating habits.



Laura recognises that there is no such thing as a one-size-fits-all approach to health and is passionate about working with individuals to achieve their health goals through developing positive, long-lasting eating habits. She believes in helping people discover the ways in which a balanced, consistent diet can help them experience more out of life.

Optimum Intake has specifically designed a bariatric surgery care package, in conjunction with your surgeon, to maximise the support we can provide our clients. The package includes a comprehensive pre-operative assessment and post surgery reviews over a period of 12 months. The following section outlines what to expect from each consult.



## Initial consultation (at least 4 weeks prior to surgery)

The initial consult is an opportunity for us to get to know a bit about you, so that we can tailor education and nutritional advice to meet your individual needs. This will most likely involve a discussion about:

- Your motivation for surgery, long-term goals and setting of realistic expectations.
- Previous weight loss strategies.
- Your relationship and attitudes towards food and your eating behaviours.
- Diet related social factors such as type of employment and working hours, family situation, cooking skills, financial constraints, stress and any other factors that may be relevant.
- Your food preferences (likes and dislikes) and any food allergy or intolerances.
- Your current food intake, including the types of food you eat regularly and your typical eating pattern.
- Understanding appetite changes.
- Any relevant pre-existing medical conditions and medications.
- Any pre-existing nutrient deficiencies, including education on correcting deficiencies prior to surgery. Nutritional supplementation to prevent nutrient deficiencies post-surgery, this will also be covered in more detail in your post-surgery reviews.

The initial consultation will give us an opportunity to provide you with important information in preparation for surgery. This will include education on the following:

- **Preoperative VLCD regime**

A Very Low Calorie Diet (VLCD) is recommended in the 4 weeks leading up to your surgery. It is designed specifically to reduce some of your abdominal fat stores to make surgery more straight forward. It is important to discuss the diet face to face so we can determine whether it is safe for you, make any adjustments to meet your individual needs, and discuss any practical issues to ensure that the diet is easy for you to follow.

- **Introduction to how eating will change after your surgery**

It is important to have a good understanding of what to expect after surgery. For the majority of people, the surgery will require significant changes to the way they eat. We will discuss some of these changes in the initial consult so you can start to prepare yourself by practicing specific eating behaviours and patterns. We will also briefly discuss the initial phases of food texture modification which occurs in the first 4-6 weeks following surgery so you can start to prepare in terms of gathering recipes, cooking tools, appliances and supplements.

Most importantly the initial consult is your opportunity to ask questions and discuss any concerns you may have, so that you can feel as confident and as relaxed as possible for your surgery.



## Post-operative Reviews

### Week 2 and 4

For the first 4-6 weeks following surgery you will require a texture modified diet progressing from fluids, to puree and then soft foods. This will help maximise your comfort and reduce the risk of complications as your body heals. We recommend having a face to face review (Skype if required) at 2 and 4 weeks post surgery so we can support you through the phases of texture progression (liquid, soft to solid) and deal with any issues as they arise. In our experience, individuals vary in how they progress through the texture phases, some find it confusing, and find the review sessions with dietitian to be very beneficial. We will provide you with:

- Education and resources,.
- Individualised meal planning and recipe modifications.
- Support you through each texture phase.
- Tips for monitoring food tolerance.
- Support for any food cravings and emotional eating.
- Support on sharing your experience with family and friends and begin to eat out socially.

Some vitamin and mineral supplementation is required life long after surgery to prevent nutrient deficiencies. During the review sessions we will give you supplementation recommendations based on the type of surgery, your age, gender and other factors, and advice on how to monitor your nutrient levels.

### 3 months, 6 months and 12months

Life after bariatric surgery can be very different and is made much easier when you have regular dietitian support. During these reviews we will discuss your progress, monitor your vitamin and mineral levels, support you with meal planning and address any issues you may be having with your diet. We will help you discover the benefits of moderation, balance and consistency and help you achieve your health goals through lifestyle changes.

These review appointments also allow the opportunity for us to provide encouragement, motivation and reassurance; appropriate support to improve your relationship and attitudes towards all foods; and discuss any eating habits and behaviours that are concerning you. We may also recommend engaging with a psychologist if you are having mental or emotional difficulties through your journey, especially if it is becoming a barrier to your continued success. We want you to feel positive and confident to embrace your new life.

### Contact Details:

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