

After Your Bariatric Surgery

Information for patients and families

Read this information to learn:

- What problems to look out for
- How to care for yourself at home
- About your follow-up appointment
- Who to call if you have any questions

The success of your surgery depends on how well you are able to:

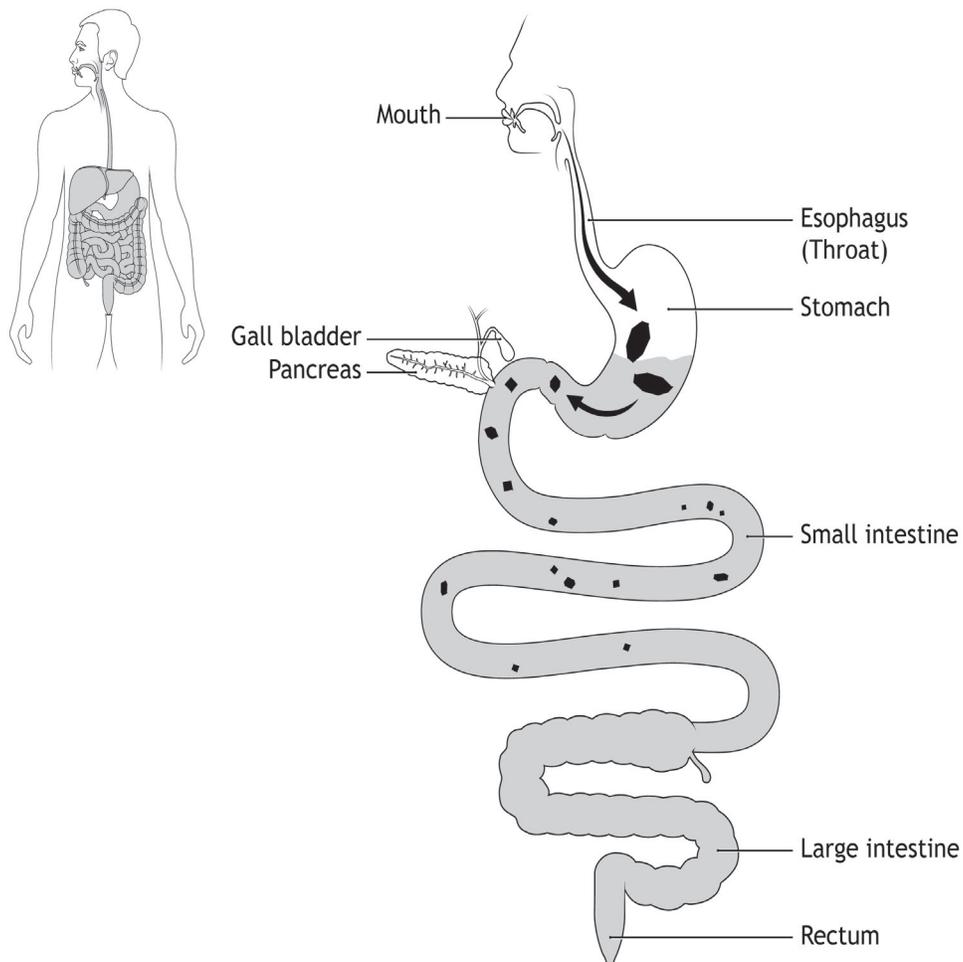
- ✓ follow the instructions for your diet
- ✓ exercise
- ✓ change your daily habits to meet the new needs of your body



About your gastric bypass surgery

You had bariatric surgery to help you lose weight. You either had a Roux-en-Y gastric bypass (roo-ahn-Y), vertical sleeve gastrectomy (VSG) or Single Anastomosis Duodeno-Ileal Bypass (SADI) surgery. Most patients can go home 1 to 2 days after surgery.

Your stomach is now a much smaller pouch. This means that the amount of food you can eat at one time is much less than normal.

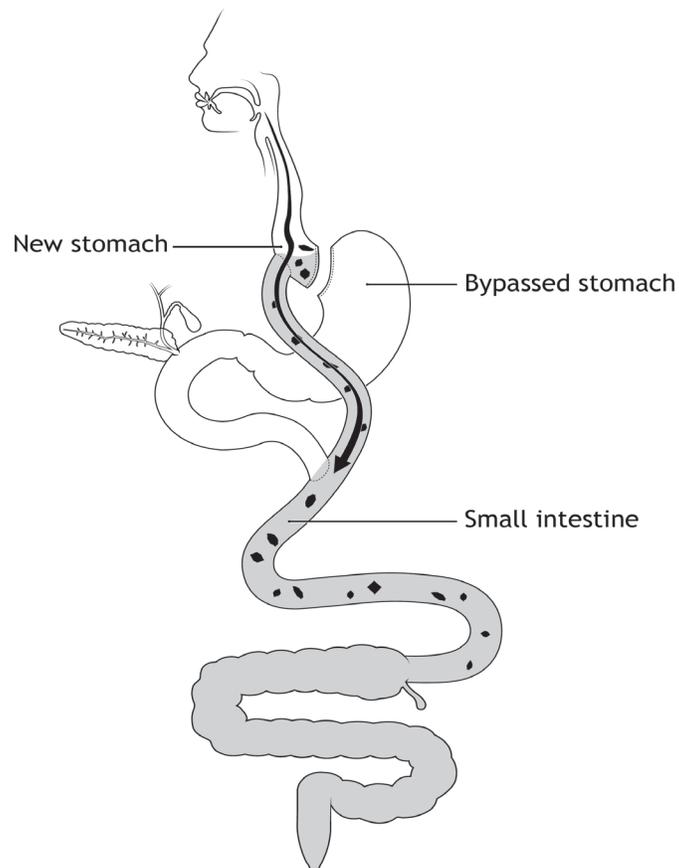


Before surgery

About your Roux-en-Y gastric bypass

You had Roux-en-Y gastric bypass (RYGB) surgery to help you lose weight and improve your health. Most patients can go home 1 day after surgery.

Your stomach is now a much smaller pouch. This means that the amount of food you can eat at one time is much less than normal. Also, your small intestine is shorter and a portion of it is now bypassed meaning you will absorb less food and nutrients and this will lead to further weight loss.



Roux-en-Y

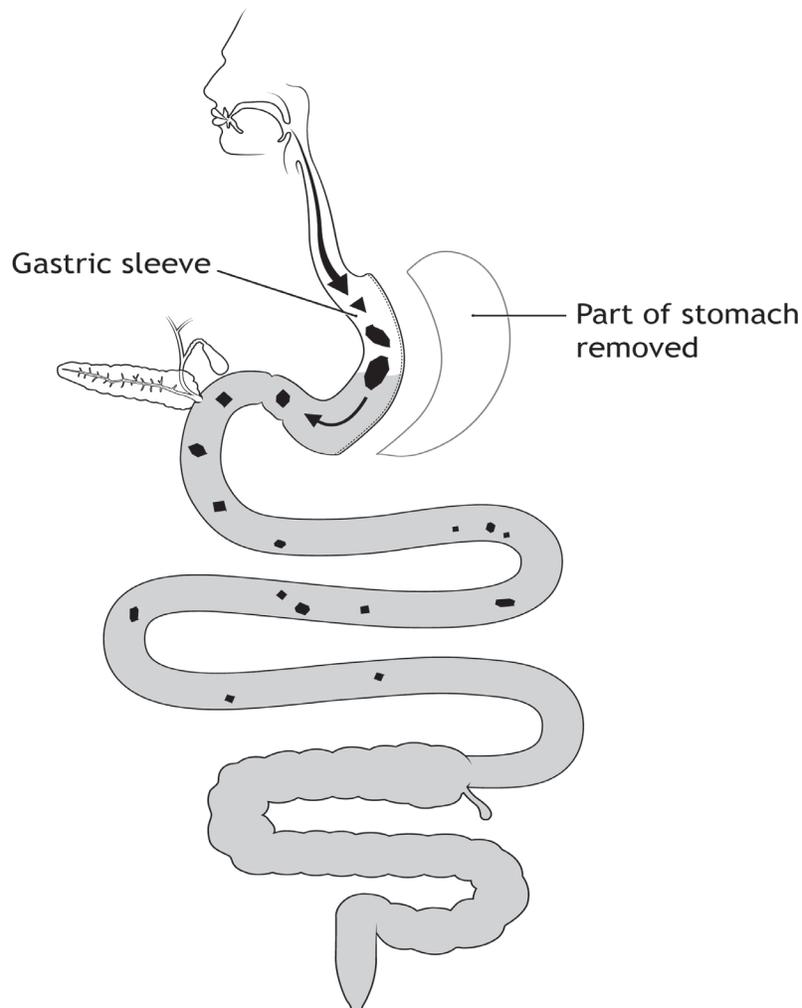
Important: Medications after the RYGB

- Do not use anti-inflammatory (NSAID) medications for pain after an RYGB (for example: Advil, Aleve or Naproxen). Speak to your family doctor about different pain medication options.
- The RYGB can change the way you absorb certain medications so please speak to your prescribing doctor to see if you need to change dosages.

About your vertical sleeve gastrectomy

You had VSG surgery to help you lose weight and improve your health. Most patients can go home 1 day after surgery.

Your stomach is now a much smaller pouch. This means that the amount of food you can eat at one time is much less than normal.



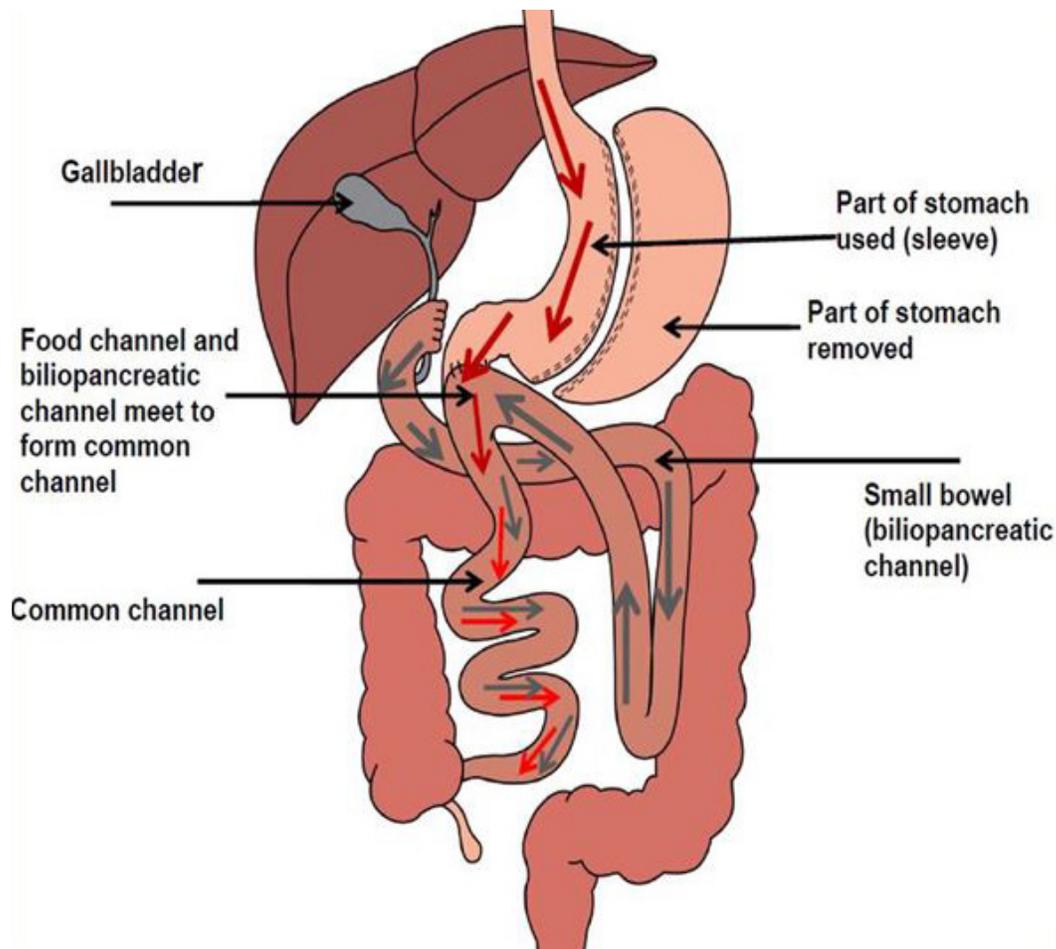
Sleeve gastrectomy

About your SADI

You had a SADI surgery to help you lose weight and improve your health. Most patients can go home 2 days after surgery.

Your stomach is now a much smaller pouch. This means that the amount of food you can eat at one time is much less than normal. In addition, a portion of your small intestine is now bypassed, so you will absorb less food and nutrients, leading to further weight loss.

Single Anastomosis Duodeno-Ileal Bypass (SADI)



With permission from St Joseph's Healthcare Hamilton

- ↓ Food moving through the stomach and common channel.
- ↓ Bile moving through the biliopancreatic channel and common channel.



Call the Bariatric Clinic, nurse navigator, your surgeon or go to the closest emergency room if you have:

- Increased pain in your abdomen (stomach area)
- Increased redness, swelling, bleeding or pus (yellowish smelly liquid) draining from your incision (cut)
- Pain that does not get better after taking your pain medicine
- Increased pain in your legs or feet
- A fever higher than 38 °C or 100 °F and have chills
- Nausea and vomiting for more than 12 hours that makes it hard to keep down fluids
- Severe bloating

If you go to the emergency room, you must tell the staff that you recently had bariatric surgery.

How should I care for myself after surgery?

What can I eat and drink?

Please follow the instructions in the nutrition manual you received at your nutrition class before surgery. This manual will have instructions for what you can eat and drink. Follow the liquid diet for 2 weeks then move to the pureed diet for 2 weeks.

Vitamins and minerals

You can start taking your vitamins and minerals once you get home. We recommend you take these vitamin and mineral supplements for the rest of your life. **Please follow the instructions in the nutrition manual you received at your nutrition class before surgery.**

Protein supplements

Start to take your protein supplements when you get home from the hospital. Read your nutrition manual for more information.

Nausea and vomiting

After surgery, you may feel sick to your stomach or vomit more easily. This can happen if you eat too fast, do not chew your food well enough or eat foods that do not agree with your stomach.

If you have severe nausea and vomiting or if you cannot keep down fluids, go to the closest emergency department.

Remember:

- ✓ Take small sips and chew your food well.
- ✓ Separate your food and drinks by at least 30 minutes.
- ✓ Book an appointment with your family doctor 1 to 2 weeks after surgery for a check up.
- ✓ Make sure you have a 1-month check-up appointment scheduled with the dietitian and nurse at the Bariatric Clinic. Check the Visits tab on myuhn.ca for more information.
- ✓ Contact your dietitian if you have any questions or concerns about what to eat or drink.

When can I shower?

You can shower 48 hours after your surgery but you must wait 1 week before you can soak in a bathtub. Gently pat your incision dry when it gets wet after bathing.

How do I care for my wounds?

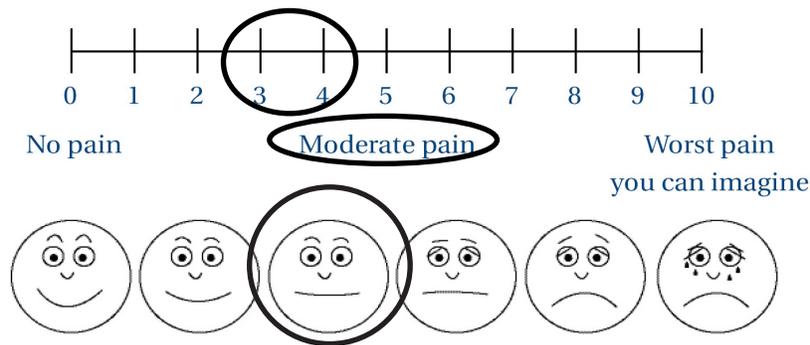
- Bandages are placed on the little incisions the surgeon made. These bandages are called “steri-strips.” They look like little pieces of white tape.
- Your incisions may look a little red and may drain a small amount of white or yellow liquid. You may see small scabs. This is normal.
- The nurse will change your dressing before you go home. Keep your incisions clean and dry. The steri-strips will fall off in about 5 to 7 days. If they do not fall off, you can take them off.
- Check your incisions each day for signs of infection such as increased redness, swelling or pus (yellowish smelly liquid coming out of your wound). Tell your doctor if you notice these signs of infection.
- If you have staples or stitches to keep your incisions closed, your family doctor can remove them during your check-up appointment. (Please schedule this 1 to 2 weeks after surgery).
- Your incision scars may be red, dark pink or purple. These may or may not get lighter over the next year. This will depend on your skin type. To help your scars become lighter, protect your skin from the sun by using sunscreen.

Remember: you can call the nurse navigator at 416 262 2691, the Bariatric Clinic at 416 603 5800 ext. 6145 or your family doctor or nurse practitioner with any wound concerns.

How can I manage my pain?

You may have some pain from your incisions. The air put into your stomach to help the surgeon see better may cause pain in your shoulders and cause your stomach to feel hard. This usually gets better within the first 3 days.

- It is important to manage and control your pain as you heal. You will get a prescription for pain medicine before you go home. If you have pain, take the pain medicine before the pain becomes very bad. Take it when your pain is at number 3 or 4 on the pain scale below.



May be duplicated for use in clinical practice. As appears in McCaffery M, Pasero C: Pain: Clinical manual. pp. 68-73, 1999, Mosby, Inc.

Keeping your pain under control will help you move and walk comfortably.

Call the Bariatric Clinic if your pain does not:

- get better with each passing day
- decrease after taking your medicine
- go away after a few weeks

Some of the pain medicine that your doctor prescribes can cause constipation. Drink more fluids and follow the instructions for taking medicines to prevent constipation.

What about my medication?

- After your surgery, you will not be able to take extended (slow) release medicines (for example, medicines that end in XR, CR, or CL). Talk to your doctor if you are taking these types of medicines.
- You can take your pills without crushing them but you may find it easier to swallow liquid medicine for the first 4 to 6 weeks after surgery. Talk to your pharmacist to see if your medicines are available in a liquid form.
- Your surgeon has prescribed a medication to prevent stomach ulcers (sores in the lining of your stomach). Please take this medication for as long as it is prescribed (90 days). You usually do not need a refill of this prescription.
- Please continue to take all of your prescribed medication as usual and do not make any changes until you have spoken to the doctor who prescribed them.

Taking medication to prevent blood clots

After surgery you have a higher risk of getting a blood clot. A blood clot can be very dangerous. A blood clot can block a blood vessel, making it hard for blood to flow through your body. Sometimes the blood clot can get so big that it stops blood flow.

Your surgeon may prescribe a blood thinner (anticoagulant) to prevent clots from happening or prevent a blood clot from getting bigger. You may need to inject this medicine for 5 days or more after surgery.

Taking medication to prevent constipation

- Take 1 Colace pill (docusate sodium or other stool softener) twice a day for the first month after your surgery.
- Take 2 Senekot pills (sennoside) at bedtime for 5 days starting the first day you arrive home from the hospital. Stop this medicine if you have diarrhea or stomach cramps.

- If you still do not have a bowel movement 5 days after surgery, take 30 milliliters of Milk of Magnesia once a day.
- If have taken Milk of Magnesia and still have no bowel movement in 24 hours, you may need a glycerine suppository. You should only take the suppository once.

Call your family doctor for a follow-up appointment if you still have constipation after following these 4 steps.

What activities can I do at home?

- You can slowly go back to doing your normal activities. Moving and walking help you recover. Staying active can prevent problems after surgery and helps you lose weight. Walking also helps your blood circulation, bowel movements, and breathing get back to normal.
- It is important to move, so make sure you take your pain medicine as prescribed to make this easier for you.
- Start with short walks a few times a day. You will feel tired, so rest and take breaks, but try to keep walking. As you recover, you will be able to walk farther, for a longer time, and more often each day.
- Do not do any hard exercise or activities for 3 months. Wait until your surgeon or nurse says it is safe.
- Do not lift or push anything more than 20 lbs for the first 6 weeks after surgery.
 - Examples: pushing a lawn mower, shoveling snow or lifting heavy grocery bags or young children more than 20 pounds
- Have family members and friends help you lift and carry heavy objects when you get home.
- You may feel uncomfortable when you cough or sneeze. Holding a pillow against your stomach will help.

What about sex?

You can have be sexually active when you feel well enough.

Important information about pregnancy

It is very important to NOT get pregnant for at least:

- 12 to 18 months after gastric bypass or vertical sleeve gastrectomy surgery
- 2 years after a SADI

Birth control pills will not work after your surgery so talk to your doctor about other ways to prevent pregnancy such as an IUD.

When can I go back to work or school?

Patients usually take off 4 to 6 weeks from work or school after surgery. When you return to work depends on how you feel and your type of job. If you need more time off, please speak to your family doctor for a letter or exemption.

When will I have my follow-up appointment?

You will have follow-up appointments at the Bariatric Clinic 1 month, 3 months, 6 months, and 1 year after your surgery. You may have appointments after one year later depending on the type of surgery you've had. Please call the Bariatric Clinic if you have not received your 1-month appointment. Check the Visits tab on myuhn.ca for more information.

It is important for you to follow up with the team even if you are feeling well. Your health care team will help you prevent common problems after your surgery such as not getting enough nutrients.

You will have other follow-up appointments to see different members of the Bariatric Clinic team such as:

- nurses
- dietitians
- social workers
- psychologists or psychiatrists
- doctors (as needed)

Important changes to your health records

- Please bring your health card (OHIP) with you to all appointments and let us know if your version code has changed.
- Please also let us know if you change your family doctor or members of your health care team.

MedicAlert

It may be helpful for you to get a MedicAlert bracelet after your surgery. This bracelet will alert other health care workers in case of an emergency that you had bariatric surgery. You can also include any other allergies or health concerns.

For more information go to: www.medicalert.ca/Products/All

Who can I call if I have any questions?

Bariatric Clinic

East Wing – 4th floor

Toronto Western Hospital

399 Bathurst Street Toronto, Ontario M5T 2S8

Phone: 416 603 5800 extension 6145

Fax: 416 603 5142

Hours: 8:00 am to 4:00 pm

Bariatric website: https://www.uhn.ca/Surgery/Clinics/Bariatric_Clinic#information

Nurse Navigator

Phone: 416 262 2691

Email: nursenavigator.western@uhn.ca

In-Patient Unit 9B Fell

Combined Surgical Unit (CSU)

Phone: 416 603 5830



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