

SPECIAL CONSIDERATIONS

Gastric Bypass surgery creates dramatic changes in the size and shape of the stomach. It may take awhile to get used to these changes. Patients report a wide variety of complications after surgery. Some of these will go away with time, while others can be lessened with adjustment of the diet.

NAUSEA AND VOMITING: These are the most common complications that will occur in the first few months after gastric bypass surgery. They may occur after eating too fast, drinking liquids while you eat, not chewing enough or eating more than your new stomach can hold. It is absolutely necessary that you learn to eat very slowly and chew foods thoroughly. Nausea and vomiting can also be triggered after trying a new food. If this happens, allow a few weeks to pass before you try to eat that particular food again. This is why it is important to only try one new food at a time. Notify your physician if frequent vomiting persists despite change in eating habits.

DEHYDRATION: Loss of body fluids or dehydration is also an important concern, especially if vomiting or diarrhea is frequent. Prevent dehydration by drinking water or low-calorie beverages between meals, but remember that the stomach can only hold 2-3 ounces at a time.

DUMPING SYNDROME: Occurs when food passes too quickly from the stomach into the small intestine. Symptoms include a combination of nausea, uncomfortable fullness, cramping, diarrhea, weakness, sweating and fast heart rate. Eating very sweet or sugary foods can provoke dumping. Reduce intake of sweets and notify your physician if symptoms persist.

FOOD INTOLERANCES: Many patients experience food intolerances, especially to red meat, milk and high-fiber foods. Since food intolerances vary with the individual, a dietician can help with sorting out food choices to minimize symptoms.

OVEREATING: Almost all people who require gastric bypass surgery have had problems with overeating. The causes for this are complex involving genetics, emotions, upbringing and even the functions of the brain. None of this will change after surgery, but the size of your stomach will change. You must train yourself to eat only the amount allowed by your new stomach. Eating more than 1-2 ounces at a time can cause vomiting, expansion of the pouch, weight gain and even rupture of the stomach. Education, group support and simply being aware of yourself can help to prevent overeating and are just as important as diet to the success of the operation.

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