

# Preparing for Bariatric Surgery: Liquid Diet

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Your surgeon has ordered a liquid diet before your bariatric surgery. This can help lower your risk of surgery by making your liver smaller and helping you lose some weight.

The meal replacement drinks on the liquid diet provide fewer calories and less carbohydrate than you usually eat. They will still provide enough protein, fat, vitamins, and minerals to meet your needs. These drinks replace all your meals and snacks.

## How long will I be on the liquid diet?

Most people are on the liquid diet for 2–6 weeks before surgery. Your surgeon and dietitian will work with you to make a plan that's best for you.

**I will be on the liquid diet for \_\_\_\_\_ weeks.**

You will receive special instructions about what to do on the day before surgery. The instructions will tell you when to stop the liquid diet and when to stop drinking all fluids (fasting).

## Does the liquid diet include anything other than the meal replacement drinks?

No; the liquid diet works best when the meal replacements replace all meals and snacks. If any changes are needed, your doctor or dietitian will talk to you about it.

- Don't have alcohol or other drinks with calories while you're on this liquid diet.
- You can use sugar-free gum.

### Ideas to add variety:

- You can add calorie-free flavours to the meal replacements such as instant coffee, cinnamon, sugar-free syrups, or extracts like vanilla.
- You can add ice and use a blender or a mixer on the lowest speed to make a frothy shake.

## How much fluid do I need?

Most people need 2700–3700 mL (11–15 cups) of fluid each day. The meal replacements do not provide enough fluid to meet all of your needs.

In addition to the meal replacements, drink 1500–2500 mL (6–10 cups) of calorie-free fluids each day. Calorie-free fluids have less than 5 calories in a serving. Choose:

- water
- tea or coffee with no milk, cream, or sugar
  - sugar substitutes are ok to use
- sugar-free or zero calorie drinks or drink mixes
  - drinks with no bubbles (non-carbonated)

You can also have 250–500 mL (1–2 cups) of clear low sodium broth each day.

## My liquid diet before surgery

**I will start my liquid diet on \_\_\_\_\_**  
(Date)

### Meal replacement:

\_\_\_\_\_

**Amount:** \_\_\_\_\_ every day

\_\_\_\_\_

**I will also drink \_\_\_\_\_ water and other calorie-free fluids every day.**

### Notes:

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

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\_\_\_\_\_

## When do I drink the meal replacements?

Drink the meal replacements at the times you would usually have meals, about 4–5 hours apart.

- Drink a meal replacement for breakfast, and then use one for lunch and one for supper.
- Drink the other meal replacements at snack times (for example, afternoon and evening).

If you only have one meal replacement for snacks, you can drink half for an afternoon snack and half for an evening snack.

Most meal replacements are ready to drink. For powdered meal replacements, mix each package with water. Follow the directions on the package. To prevent clumping, mix each one just before you plan to drink it.

## Where can I get the meal replacements?

You can buy them at most grocery stores and pharmacies. If you can't find the right product, ask the store pharmacist or your dietitian. **Only use the type and amount of product that is recommended for you.**

## Will I be hungry?

You may feel hungry when you start the meal replacements. After the first few days, your body will get used to eating fewer calories and you should feel less hungry. Drinking the meal replacements about 4–5 hours apart can help manage your hunger.

Some people don't feel hungry on the liquid diet and may forget to drink a meal replacement. It's important to drink all of the meal replacements every day.

## What about my medicines?

Your doctor may change some of your medicines while you're on the meal replacements. Medicines that may need to be changed include those for diabetes or high blood pressure, water pills or blood thinners.

## Are there any side effects?

Some people have side effects when they're on the liquid diet. Use the chart below, and tell your healthcare team about any side effects.

Side Effects:	What may help:
Bad breath or dry mouth	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Drink more fluids</li><li>• Brush your teeth and tongue more often</li><li>• Use alcohol-free mouthwash</li><li>• Chew sugar-free gum</li></ul>
Constipation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Drink more fluids</li><li>• Take a fibre supplement</li><li>• Ask your doctor if a stool softener or laxative may help</li></ul>
Diarrhea	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Drink more water</li><li>• Ask your doctor if you need medicine or a fibre supplement</li></ul>
Dizziness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Drink more fluids</li><li>• Drink all the meal replacements each day</li><li>• See your doctor</li></ul>
Tired (fatigue)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Get plenty of rest</li><li>• Drink all the meal replacements each day</li><li>• Drink more fluids</li></ul>

## Record in your journal:

- how much you drink each day
- any side effects you have
- your weight each week
- your blood sugar, if you have diabetes
- your blood pressure, if you have high blood pressure

Your healthcare team may ask you to track the items above and/or other items.