

Dietary Stages Following Vertical Sleeve Gastrectomy

Vertical sleeve gastrectomy (VSG) is a surgical procedure that removed approximately 80% of your stomach to help you lose weight. The sleeve will help you tell when you are full, and you may not feel hungry between meals.

Following a healthful bariatric diet is essential for weight-loss success. The stages below are suggestions for a bariatric diet following your surgery. Please consult with your registered dietitian (RD) for further guidance and support.

Stage 1: Clear liquid diet

Duration: 24 to 48 hours

You may drink dairy-, caffeine-, and sugar-free noncarbonated beverages such as water, decaf coffee, and decaf tea as well as low-sodium broths, sugar-free gelatin, and sugar-free popsicles.

Stage 2: Full liquid diet

Duration: 10 to 14 days

In addition to the items from stage 1, you may drink lactose-free nonfat milk and sugar-free protein shakes. To stay healthy as you rapidly lose weight, ensure that you consume at least 60 g of protein per day by drinking protein shakes three times per day. Drink clear liquids 30 minutes after drinking your shake to avoid overfilling your sleeve.

Stage 3: Puréed diet

Duration: 10 to 14 days

Now you will begin consuming solid foods that have been puréed to a smooth consistency. You should avoid consuming overly spicy foods at this point, and you should use healthful cooking techniques such as grilling, baking, poaching, or stewing.

Eat single foods and avoid combinations to ensure tolerance. If you get sick from a particular food, it will be easier to identify the culprit. For example, ensure you can tolerate eggs as a single food and cheese as a single food before making a cheese omelet. If you can tolerate single food components, then you can combine these components.

Eat protein first when consuming a meal. Good sources of protein are dairy such as cottage cheese, Greek yogurt, and soft cheeses as well as seafood, shellfish, poultry, legumes, and lean pork and beef.

Purée foods in broth to a smooth texture and consume these meals until you feel the sense of fullness. Eat slowly and take 30 minutes to eat a meal, or stop eating if you feel full before the 30 minutes have elapsed. The key is to listen to your body and stop when you feel full, but do not take longer than 30 minutes to eat a meal.

If you do not feel full after 30 minutes, make sure you're eating 3 to 5 oz of protein. If you can tolerate puréed proteins, you may purée cooked vegetables and add them to your meal. You also may try consuming puréed fruits such as unsweetened applesauce.

Keep a food diary to ensure you're meeting your required protein needs every day. Also, don't forget to drink fluids in between meals. It is suggested you drink at least 1.5 L (roughly 50 oz) per day.

Stage 4: Mechanically soft diet

Duration: As recommended by your RD

You can stop puréeing your food during this stage, but you must make sure to chop or cut your food into small pieces. Eat slowly and chew your food so it reaches a puréed consistency in your mouth.

At this stage you probably will be able to tolerate a variety of foods, but remember to eat protein first to ensure you are meeting your needs.

Avoid stringy or tough, fibrous vegetables and fruits or any foods that are difficult to chew.

Remember to eat three meals per day. You may drink a protein shake to supplement your protein intake if necessary. Continue to drink clear liquids between meals.

Stage 5: Regular diet

Duration: As recommended by your RD

During this stage, you can expand the types of healthful foods you consume and try different textures of food. Always remember to chew your food thoroughly and eat slowly, and remember not to eat and drink together. Each day you should consume lean proteins, at least five servings of fruits and vegetables, and at least two servings of complex carbohydrates. You may continue consuming protein shakes only if you cannot meet your protein needs with food.

Continue to keep a food diary to monitor your intake. Remember to eat three meals per day and exercise most days of the week or as recommended by your health care provider. Remember to take your vitamins and minerals every day as directed.

Continue to follow up with your RD for help in your efforts toward successful weight loss and maintenance.

Recommended Vitamins and Minerals

- One adult-strength multivitamin that contains iron, folic acid, and thiamine (vitamin B₁) daily

- A daily sublingual vitamin containing 500 mcg of vitamin B₁₂ or a monthly injection of 1,000 mcg of vitamin B₁₂
- Calcium citrate containing 1,200 to 1,500 mg plus vitamin D; it is suggested to take calcium in at least two dosages. For example, take 600 mg after breakfast and 600 mg after lunch. To enhance absorption, do not take calcium citrate with your iron supplement. Wait at least two hours after taking calcium to take your iron supplement.
- A separate supplement of 3,000 IU of vitamin D or as recommended by your health care practitioner if you have a vitamin D deficiency
- A daily elemental iron supplement containing 45 to 60 mg