

Quick Tips for Common Complaints

Note: If any of these problems persist, or if you think you might be having a medical emergency, contact your doctor or dial 911.

Nausea

First Few Weeks After Surgery

- Slow down your drinking or eating.
- Drink enough fluids—do not gulp; drink sips throughout the day.
- Change temperature of the fluids you are drinking.
- Avoid strong smells (drink protein drink from covered container).
- Blend protein drinks with ice.
- Try sugar-free popsicles, ginger tea, or adding lemon to water.
- Stay within diet guidelines!

Beyond the First Few Weeks Following Surgery

- Eat slowly (take 20 to 30 minutes per small meal), and chew thoroughly (20 chews per bite).
- Don't overeat (follow recommended portion sizes).
- Relax at meal times—avoid distractions and stressful eating environments.
- Avoid foods that cause intolerance (e.g., dry meats, gummy starches such as pasta and bread, stringy foods).
- Stay within the diet guidelines!

Dumping Syndrome

(Nausea, diarrhea, cramping, dizziness, sweating, faintness, fast heartbeat; can occur 15 to 40 minutes or 1 to 3 hours after eating.)

- Avoid added sugar (including hidden sugars), alcohol and greasy, fatty foods.
- Avoid drinking with meals and for 30 minutes after meals.
- Eat protein and complex carbohydrates with meals and snacks.
- Eat five to six small meals per day.

Diarrhea

- Try eliminating foods with lactose (e.g., milk, pudding), or try lactose-free milk or lactase supplements (e.g., Lactaid) when you take dairy products.
- Avoid sugar, including juice. Read food labels to be sure that the sugar content is less than 5 grams per serving (the sugar content in whole fruits, milk, and yogurt may be slightly higher).
- Limit sugar alcohols (found in some sugar-free products). Types of sugar alcohol include sorbitol, mannitol, maltitol, and other additives that end in “ol.”
- Do not eat and drink at the same time, and wait 30 minutes after eating to begin drinking.
- Avoid greasy and high-fat foods (especially if you have had biliopancreatic diversion [BPD]).
- Take probiotics or eat sugar-free, fat-free yogurt with live cultures.

Constipation

- Drink adequate fluid (you may need more than 64 ounces per day).
- Walk or engage in physical activity daily.
- Take stool softeners daily until you are able to increase your fiber intake.
- After consuming your protein foods, eat high-fiber vegetables as your stomach capacity allows.
- Add a soluble fiber supplement such as Benefiber (may cause gas) or Citrucel.
- Take probiotics or eat sugar-free, fat-free yogurt with live cultures.
- If you do not have a bowel movement in three days, consult your health care provider.

Dizziness or Headache

- Drink enough fluid.
- Drink a zero-calorie sport drink or electrolyte replacement drink.
- Drink bouillon.
- Distribute food and drink throughout the day.
- Make sure you get enough protein throughout the day.
- If you had diabetes before surgery, check your blood glucose (sugar) levels; you may need to contact your doctor to adjust your medication.

“Stuck” Feeling in Stomach (Plugging)

- Eat slowly and chew thoroughly (20 chews per bite).
- Don't overeat (follow recommended portion sizes).
- Take small bites (using a baby spoon can help).
- Relax at meal times.
- Avoid foods that cause intolerance, such as tough or dry meats (e.g., grilled meats), gummy starches (e.g., rice, pasta, untoasted breads), or stringy foods (e.g., celery or lettuce); eventually, you may be able to tolerate these foods.
- Stay within the diet guidelines!

Gas

- Eat slowly and chew thoroughly (20 chews per bite).
- Don't overeat (follow recommended portion sizes).
- Relax at meal times.
- Avoid dairy if you are lactose intolerant.
- Limit fat (especially if you had BPD).
- Avoid carbonated drinks and using straws or chewing gum.
- When increasing dietary fiber, do so gradually.
- Try an enzymatic supplement, such as Beano, with your first bite of gas-producing foods (certain vegetables, sugar alcohols)
- Try simethicone products (e.g., Gas-X strips) or Devrom (an internal deodorant).
- Try probiotics.

Bad Breath

- Use breath mints (don't overdo it, because these have sugar alcohols).
- Rinse with mouthwash.