

MONTHLY NUTRITION HIGHLIGHTS

Why do I need a Multivitamin after bariatric surgery

Most of us go through our lives assuming that nutrition - vitamins, minerals, proteins, etc - is something we get from food. But after bariatric surgery, you will almost certainly be asked to take a multivitamin for the rest of your life. Knowing some of the reasons why may help to keep you motivated with what might be a new part of your routine.

Many patients start out deficient?

You may not know this, but it is very common that people who are obese have nutritional deficiencies, or have marginally low levels of vitamins and minerals. The reasons for this are not entirely well understood, but studies generally show that the higher your BMI (Body Mass Index) is, the more likely you are to have low nutrition. Common deficiencies found before surgery include vitamin D, zinc, vitamin E, selenium and several of the B-vitamins. You may or may not have some of these tested for prior to surgery. If you start out with low levels of nutrients, and then have surgery that causes you to eat less and perhaps have malabsorption, it can be hard to catch up without supplementing some of your nutrients.

All surgeries increase the risk for deficiency?

All forms of bariatric surgery increase the risk for nutritional deficiency. At the very least, with a purely restrictive procedure like an adjustable gastric band, you eat less food it is just much harder to get all the nutrition you need each and every day. If you have a procedure like a sleeve gastrectomy, gastric bypass or duodenal switch your risk for deficiency increases because of the changes in your anatomy. The more that is changed, the more you are at risk.

Nutritional deficiency can be serious

There are a set of vitamins and minerals that are called "essential". This means that you need them each and every day in adequate amounts in order for your body to have normal function. If you don't get them over days, weeks, or months, things can and do go wrong with your body. These can be mild things like fatigue, but they can be very serious things like poor immune function, permanent damage to your nerves or heart, blindness, bone loss/fracture, and (in rare cases) death. While most deficiencies get caught when they are mild and treatable, most people with even low-grade deficiency just don't feel as well as they should.

Can't I just get my nutrition from my food?

You can and should be getting nutrition from food. Vitamins are called "supplements" for the very reason that they should be supplementing the nutrition you get from food. But after surgery, it is just really hard to take in enough nutrition to meet your basic needs. A study done 2008 followed more than 200 post-operative weight loss surgery patients that were not taking a multivitamin. While the study found that they all ate better after surgery as a compared to before, not one patient was able to

achieve the minimal daily requirement for vitamin A, vitamin C, Calcium, Iron, B1, B3, B6, Folate, Biotin or Pantothenic Acid (B5).

The risk for deficiency is also well established from clinical studies that have followed the health of weight loss surgery patients over many years. Because of this, the American Society of Metabolic and Bariatric Surgeons (ASMBS) and a group formed by the American Academy of Clinical Endocrinologists, The Obesity Society and the ASMBS both recommend a daily multivitamin after all forms of weight loss surgery.

How do I know if I have a problem with my vitamin levels?

Along with nutritional recommendations, it is very likely that your doctor will give you instructions to have regular lab work done after surgery. Some of these labs will most likely be to check for deficiency. All programs are unique in these recommendations, and they vary by procedure, so if you have questions it is best to address them with your doctor. If you stop returning to your bariatric surgery program for follow-up care, it is important to have a list of the labs you need to provide to your primary care physician.



Bariatric Advantage® Multi Formulas
Why take a bariatric vitamin?

The nutritional needs of a bariatric surgery patient are different from that of the general population. One possible advantage of "bariatric specific" multivitamins is that, similar to the way pre-natal vitamins are tailored to the needs of pregnant women, they may be more likely to offer the levels and forms of nutrients preferred in this population.

Bariatric Advantage offers multivitamin formulas for all bariatric surgery procedures, as well as for pre-operative patients. Our products are designed to help patients meet the nutritional recommendations of the ASMBS. They are developed using the highest-quality ingredients, appropriate forms and levels of nutrients, and are available in a variety of sizes and flavors to support compliance. For more information, talk to your doctor or dietitian, visit us on-line or call us at the number below.



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