



York and Scarborough  
Teaching Hospitals  
NHS Foundation Trust

# Bariatric (Weight loss) Surgery Pre-operative Liver Reduction Diet

Information for patients, relatives and carers

① For more information, please contact:

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# Introduction

## Pre-operative Liver Reduction Diet

- This diet needs to be followed for **two weeks** before weight loss (bariatric) surgery. There are three options, choose one option:
  - Liquid Diet
  - Meal Replacement Diet
  - Calorie Controlled Meals
- The pre-operative diet plan is designed to provide approximately 100 grams (g) carbohydrates per day. It should be low in fat and moderate to high in protein. Overall, the daily energy intake **should not exceed 800 - 1000 kcal per day.**
- The purpose of the diet is to reduce the size of the liver to make surgery easier and to reduce the risks of surgery.
- The diet needs to be followed strictly. Having larger portion sizes can lead to keyhole surgery being converted to open surgery, or inadequate shrinkage of the liver, making surgery more difficult or not possible.
- If you are considering having a favourite / special meal before your operation this needs to be planned **before you start the pre-operative diet.** Otherwise, it will result in the size of your liver increasing.

- Any weight you can lose through dieting before surgery is an advantage. You can expect to lose a lot of weight during the pre-operative diet (up to one stone / 6 kgs in two weeks). A large amount of this weight will be water loss.
- **This diet is not to be followed after surgery or by anyone else.**

Once you start the pre-operative diet you should commence an over-the-counter chewable multivitamin recommended by your Dietitian, for example:

- Bassett's Chewable multivitamin
- Centrum Fruity Chewables Multivitamin / mineral
- Natures Plus Adults Chewable Multivitamin
- Superdrug A - Z Chewable Multivitamin and Mineral
- Baricol Chewable Tablet

If you have diabetes and require insulin and / or diabetes medication, please contact York Hospital Diabetes Specialist Nurses on 01904 726510 before starting the pre-operative diet. This is because your insulin and/or medications may need to be adjusted during this period, and you may also need to monitor your blood sugars more closely.

# Fluids

Drink a minimum of two litres of fluid daily including:

- Water
- No added sugar squash,
- Diet drinks
- Fruit or herbal teas
- Tea and / or coffee (black or with milk from allowance)

Practice drinking at regular intervals throughout the day by setting reminders or purchasing a motivational water bottle. This will help you to establish this habit to support your post-operative diet.

You must **avoid the following drinks:**

- Alcohol
- Pure fruit juice
- Full sugar juices
- Full sugar fizzy drinks
- Full cream milk or milky drinks

Do not add any sugar to drinks, sweeteners can be used instead.

# Option 1: Liquid diet

- On this liquid diet you should not have any other food, meals or snacks.
- This option is the simplest and cost-effective pre-operation diet and would consist of a daily intake of:
  - Three pints / 1700 mL of semi-skimmed milk and
  - Two diet yoghurts (no more than 100 kcal each).
- You should not have any more milk or yoghurts than listed above. **If you require milk in tea or coffee, then this needs to be used from your allowance.**
- It is important not to have less than the amounts stated as this can make you feel unwell.

## Example 1- Liquid diet

Example Day	Milk	Yoghurt
Breakfast	Half pint / 283 mL semi-skimmed milk	
Mid-Morning	Half pint / 283 mL semi-skimmed milk	
Lunch	Half pint / 283 mL semi-skimmed milk	100 kcal yoghurt
Mid-Afternoon	Half pint / 283 mL semi-skimmed milk	
Evening Meal	Half pint / 283 mL semi-skimmed milk	100 kcal yoghurt
Supper	Half pint / 283 mL semi-skimmed milk	

Nutrition: approximately 800 kcal, 58 g protein, 85 g carbohydrates

## **Option 2: Meal replacement diet**

Specialist meal replacement products are available in supermarkets, chemists and online.

Suitable products include:

- Slimfast High Protein Meal Replacement Bottle Shakes (Pre-made)/meal replacement bars
- Myprotein Low-Cal Protein Meal Replacement Blend
- USN Diet Fuel
- Shake that Weight
- Huel (vegan options)

## Example 2 - Meal replacement diet

<b>SlimFast</b> Meal replacement shakes	Daily amount four or five drinks (325 mL) each	Approximate Nutrition (per day) 816–1020 kcal; 60–80 g protein
<b>SlimFast</b> Meal replacement shakes and one Slimfast bar	Daily amount four shakes (325 mL each) and one bar	Approximate Nutrition (per day) 915 kcal; 61 g protein
<b>SlimFast</b> Meal replacement shakes and packet of protein crisps	Daily amount four shakes (325 mL each) and one packet protein crisps	Approximate Nutrition (per day) 911 kcal; 68 g protein
<b>MyProtein</b> – Low-Cal Protein Meal Replacement Blend	Daily amount four scoops (51g) each	Approx Nutrition (per day) 824 kcal; 68 g protein
<b>USN Diet Fuel</b> Meal replacement milkshakes.	Daily amount four or five drinks (55 g) per serving	Approximate Nutrition (per day) 800–1000 kcal; 104–130 g protein
<b>Shake That Weight</b> Diet Shake	Daily amount four to five sachets	Approximate Nutrition (per day) 848–1060 kcal; 82–103 g protein

<b>Huel (Vegan options)</b>		
Black Edition complete high protein powder meal	Daily amount four scoops	Approximate Nutrition (per day) 800 kcal; 80 g protein
Huel – Original Powder Complete meal.	Daily amount four scoops	Approximate Nutrition (per day) 800 kcal; 60 g protein
Black Edition Ready-to-Drink	Daily amount four bottles	Approximate Nutrition (per day) 800 kcal; 70 g protein

- The products available include shakes, smoothies and snacks. You can check out the varieties online and check if they should be made up with water or milk.
- Shakes, smoothies, soups and meal replacement bars have approximately 200 - 230 kcal per serving.
- It is important not to have less than the amounts stated as this can make you feel unwell.
- You can have an additional allowance of 200 mL / a third of a pint of skimmed / semi-skimmed milk for use in drinks which provides 70 -100 kcal as long as you do not exceed 1000 kcal per day.

### Option 3 - Calorie controlled meals

Daily Allowance	Portion Examples
<p><b>Choose four portions of protein</b></p>	<p>100 g / 4 oz lean meat / chicken / turkey (skin removed).            125 g / 5 oz plain white fish or tinned tuna in brine/water.            Two eggs            100 g / 4 oz low fat Quorn (less than 3 g fat per 100 g) or tofu or meat substitute.            235 g lentils</p>
<p><b>Choose three portions of dairy</b></p>	<p>100 g / 4 oz low fat cottage            2 oz / 50 g low fat cheese spread.            125 g low fat yoghurt (less than 10 g carbohydrate per pot).            200 mL (third of a pint) skimmed milk / 200 mL unsweetened soya milk / alternative fortified milk.</p>
<p><b>Choose two portions of fruit</b></p>	<p>One whole piece of fresh fruit e.g. apple / orange / small banana.            Two medium fruits e.g. Satsuma / plums / kiwi/ tomatoes or half tin tomatoes.            One handful of smaller fruits e.g. grapes / berries.            Three tablespoons tinned fruit in natural juice.            One tablespoon dried fruit.            100 mL fruit juice</p>

<b>Daily Allowance</b>	<b>Portion Examples</b>
<b>Unlimited Vegetables/salad</b>	Except sweetcorn, baked beans, mushy peas, broad beans, avocado, coleslaw or mayonnaise-based salad, olives.
<b>Two portions of bread, potatoes, rice, pasta or cereal</b>	One medium size slice of bread. Two egg sized potatoes. Three tablespoons cooked noodles, rice, pasta or cereal. One biscuit of shredded wheat or Weetabix. 20 grams of porridge oats, or two crispbreads, or two plain rice cakes.
<b>Minimum one and half to two litres of fluid</b>	Water, sugar free squashes or flavoured water, sugar free fizzy drinks, marmite, Bovril, oxo, vegemite, herbal tea and coffee. (no added sugar, use skimmed milk from dairy allowance)

## **You may include:**

- Salt and pepper
- Mixed herbs
- Ground spices eg: chilli, ginger, paprika
- Gravy made with a stock cube and no thickener
- Soy sauce
- Low-fat vinaigrette
- Sugar-free jelly
- Artificial sweeteners
- Sugar-free chewing gum

## **Avoid (High in fat and carbohydrates)**

- Mayo / salad cream
- Chilli sauce / BBQ sauce / Ketchup
- Chutney / pickle
- Gravy granules
- Balsamic vinegar
- Horseradish / tartare / mint sauce
- Stuffing
- Butter / margarine
- Oils
- Jam / marmalade
- Peanut butter
- Sweets / chocolate / cake / ice-cream, Biscuits, crisps, sugar

## **Example Day:**

\*Indicates source of carbohydrate

### **Breakfast:**

Two rashers lean bacon and two boiled/poached or scrambled eggs

100 mL fruit juice or glass milk from allowance

### **Snack**

Coffee with skimmed milk from allowance

### **Light Meal**

Homemade Vegetable soup (without potatoes or lentils)

100 g lean roast beef /lamb

Large helping of salad (no dressing unless vinegar based)

One pot (125 g) low fat natural yoghurt

Tea or coffee with milk from allowance

### **Main Meal**

100 g chicken, skin removed

Large serving of three vegetables or salad

One portion of potatoes or three tablespoons of rice or three tablespoons of pasta\*

One portion of fresh fruit

Sugar free / diet drink, water, sugar free cordial

### **Supper**

Two crispbreads or one slice toast\* (no spread)

**and** 100 g / 4 oz low fat cottage cheese

Bovril or tea with skimmed milk from allowance

You may find it helpful to add different foods you fancy into tracker apps on your smartphone or access online such as: MyFitness Pal, Nutracheck or NutriTracker. This way you can keep on track with your diet to ensure you meet your 1000 kcal per day and 60 g protein targets.

There is also a useful **Tracking Table** you can download and print out on the Bariatric Padlet under '**Useful tips**' to support you each week to ensure you are meeting the daily allowances. Scan the QR code below:



**Open your phone's Camera app, point it steadily at the code** (without taking a picture), and wait for a pop-up notification or link to appear; tap that banner to open the content.

## **Additional information**

- This diet is not suitable for long term use. Your dietitian will support you through the progressive stages of your post operative diet.
- It is very important to keep to the portion sizes given.
- Food portions need to be weighed and not guessed. Eating more than recommended can reverse the effects of the pre-operative diet.
- It is important not to eat less than the portions stated as this can make you feel unwell.
- Ensure no oil or fat is added to foods when cooking. Meat and fish can be grilled or oven cooked.
- Ensure meat is very lean with visible fat removed and no skin on poultry.
- Avoid oily fish, e.g. mackerel, salmon, herring, tuna (canned tuna in brine or spring water are suitable)
- You can use herbs and spices to flavour your food. You can use a small amount of lemon juice or balsamic vinegar on salad as dressing.
- Do not use sauces, mayonnaise or other salad dressings.

- Avoid extra snacks of food in between meals not specified in the meal plan.
- Do not add sugar, syrup or honey to drinks or food.

Your dietitian will discuss the types of food suitable following your weight loss (bariatric) surgery.

If you have any questions or concerns, please contact your Dietitian.

Name:

Telephone: 01904 725269

# Constipation

Constipation is one of the most common challenges patient's report during the pre-operative diet period and following surgery. Poor management before surgery is likely to lead to challenges with constipation post operatively and can impact on your surgical recovery.

Tips for avoiding constipation:

- **Fluid intake**

Drinking enough fluid is important to prevent dehydration and constipation. It can also help reduce headaches, improve concentration, and control food cravings during the pre-surgery diet. Aim to drink at least **two litres per day**, and more in hot weather. If you find plain water difficult to drink, you can choose no-added-sugar squash, sugar-free flavoured water, or add a squeeze of lemon or lime to water. **Avoid all fizzy drinks**, as these should not be consumed after surgery.

- **Fibre intake**

Your fibre intake may change depending on which pre-surgery diet you are following. If you are on the **calorie-controlled meals** plan, you should aim for up to **two portions of vegetables or salad** and **two portions of fruit each day**. You may also get fibre from measured portions of wholegrain breakfast cereals and starchy carbohydrate foods included within your daily allowance.

When combined with adequate fluid intake, this should help prevent constipation. If you are following a **liquid diet** or **meal replacement diet**, your fibre intake is likely to be much lower. You may find some protein shakes that are fortified with fibre or add low calorie soluble fibre sources to your fluids such as chia seeds, ground flaxseeds or psyllium husk powder/capsules. The maximum dose for psyllium is six capsules or six teaspoons per day. Do not use psyllium if you have difficulty swallowing or a history of a bowel obstruction.

- **Natural remedies**

**Golden linseeds (also called flaxseeds)** are a natural and gentle way to help prevent and relieve constipation. Available as flaxseeds, whole or ground linseeds, and as golden or brown linseeds. They are available from supermarkets and health food shops. Some people find whole linseeds are as effective as ground, and it does not matter if they are golden or brown. They can be added to foods such as breakfast cereals, yoghurt, soups, or salads.

Start with **one tablespoon per day** and make sure you drink **at least 150 mL of fluid** with it. If constipation continues after one week, increase to **two tablespoons per day**, which can be taken all at once or split between morning and evening.

It is important to drink **at least 150 mL of fluid for each tablespoon of linseeds**. The recommended upper limit is two tablespoons per day (24 grams).

- **Laxative Medications**

Medications to help relieve constipation are available from your GP or can be bought over the counter from pharmacies, chemists, or supermarkets. Wherever possible, constipation should be prevented by following the 'Tips for avoiding constipation' in this leaflet.

If constipation becomes persistent or troublesome, speak to your GP or consider using a treatment that has worked well for you in the past.

## **Tell us what you think of this leaflet**

We hope that you found this leaflet helpful. If you would like to tell us what you think, please contact:  
Admin Team, York Hospital, Wigginton Road, York,  
YO31 8HE, telephone 01904 725269 or  
email [yhs-tr.yorkdietitians@nhs.net](mailto:yhs-tr.yorkdietitians@nhs.net).

## **Teaching, training and research**

Our Trust is committed to teaching, training and research to support the development of health and healthcare in our community. Healthcare students may observe consultations for this purpose. You can opt out if you do not want students to observe. We may also ask you if you would like to be involved in our research.

## **Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS)**

PALS offers impartial advice and assistance to patients, their relatives, friends and carers. We can listen to feedback (positive or negative), answer questions and help resolve any concerns about Trust services.

PALS can be contacted on 01904 726262, or email [yhs-tr.patientexperienceteam@nhs.net](mailto:yhs-tr.patientexperienceteam@nhs.net).

An answer phone is available out of hours.

## **Leaflets in alternative languages or formats**

If you would like this information in a different format, including braille or easy read, or translated into a different language, please speak to a member of staff in the ward or department providing your care.

Patient Information Leaflets can be accessed via the Trust's Patient Information Leaflet website:  
[www.yorkhospitals.nhs.uk/your-visit/patient-information-leaflets/](http://www.yorkhospitals.nhs.uk/your-visit/patient-information-leaflets/)

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