

Commonly Asked Questions About Bariatric Surgery

How long does the process take and when will I have surgery?

The pre-op process often takes about 6 to 8 months. During that time you may have 10 to 20 visits with your care team. You will meet with our team of health practitioners, who are here to support you on your journey. Your surgery will not be scheduled until your care team feels you are ready, and you have completed all medical testing and clearances.

Where will I have my surgery?

Our surgeons perform bariatric surgeries at 2 locations. You may have surgery at either:

- Maine Medical Center: 22 Bramhall Street, Portland Maine
- Southern Maine Health Care: 1 Medical Center Drive, Biddeford Maine

How long will I be in the hospital?

Usually patients spend 1 night in the hospital after surgery, and are discharged the following afternoon. You may stay longer if you have a hard time controlling your pain or if you have trouble staying hydrated.

How long will I need to be out of work?

Usually patients return to work after 2 to 4 weeks, but the time for recovery can vary. If you have a more physically demanding job, you may require being out of work longer. Fatigue (feeling tired) is one of the biggest complaints in the first few weeks after surgery. It's important to take enough time to learn how to take care of yourself, get used to your new eating pattern, and keep yourself hydrated.

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Are there any foods I will never be able to eat again?

Food tolerance can be very different from person to person. Some common foods that can cause issues include:

- Dry, tough meats
- Pasta and rice
- Soft breads
- Foods that are difficult to chew to a smooth consistency.
- Carbonated beverages

After surgery, you will need to choose foods that support your health and energy level. You may be able to eat certain snack foods that are higher in calories and lower in nutrients (such as chips, crackers, candy, cookies, and ice cream). These will make it hard to lose weight or can cause you to gain weight. Our dietitians will meet with you after surgery to help you learn to eat foods that are enjoyable and support you in your weight loss, long term weight maintenance and better health.

Are there any medications I will not be able to take after surgery?

- NSAIDs (non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs): Do **NOT** take NSAIDs for 3 months after surgery unless your surgeon tells you otherwise.

Important: Gastric bypass patients need to avoid NSAIDs **forever**, because they irritate the stomach and can cause serious ulcers. These are medications such as Ibuprofen (Advil), Aspirin, and Naproxen (Aleve).

- **Steroids:** Do **NOT** take steroids for 3 months after surgery unless your surgeon tells you otherwise. They decrease the rate of healing.

Important: Gastric bypass patients need to avoid steroids forever, because they significantly increase the risk for ulcers after gastric bypass surgery. Talk with your surgeon before taking any oral or injected steroids.