Long-term Maintenance Diet

Bariatric surgery is not an automatic solution to long-term weight loss. As a partner in your ongoing health, it's up to you to take important steps including following the proper diet, taking the appropriate vitamins and supplements and avoiding behaviors that can cause you problems.

You will need to eat small, high-protein meals and snacks about five to six times a day (or every three hours) to accommodate your small stomach pouch and keep your metabolism running strongly.

The amount of food per meal for bariatric surgery patients should never exceed one cup. We recommend:

- **Roux-en-Y Gastric Bypass:** ½ to ¾ cup per meal
- **Lap-Band:** ½ to ¾ cup per meal
- **Duodenal Switch with Sleeve Gastrectomy:** ¾ to 1 cup per meal
- **Sleeve Gastrectomy:** ¾ to 1 cup per meal

Other Recommendations

- Use a small plate and cut food into small pieces. Eat slowly, take small bites and chew thoroughly (20 times per bite) to avoid overfilling your stomach pouch. Chewing also helps with digestion and absorption of vital nutrients. Put your utensils down between bites. Your meal should take 20-30 minutes to complete.

- Focus primarily on lean protein like meats, poultry and fish.

- Eat plenty of fruits and vegetables.

- Limit refined (white) breads and starches, instead opting for complex carbohydrates such as whole grains.

- Avoid sugars and excess fat (especially trans- and saturated fats).

- Drink at least eight cups (64 oz.) of water or calorie-free fluids each day. Sip between meals but not during. Stop drinking 30 minutes before a meal and wait until 30 minutes after to drink again. This gives your body time to metabolize nutrients and eliminate waste.

- Avoid caffeine, alcohol and carbonation.

- Stop eating as soon as you feel full. Eating beyond that point can cause you to overeat or vomit. Don't keep eating until you're uncomfortably full. Keep portion sizes small.

- Avoid distractions while eating so that you can concentrate on what you are eating, on your chewing and on approaching the point of fullness.

- Exercise regularly. This helps you lose the most weight possible and maintain long-term weight loss. Exercise increases metabolism, helps maintain lean muscle mass promotes bone strength and reduces stress. Build up to
45 minutes five to six times a week. Keep it fun by finding activities that you enjoy.

- Monitor your weight and food intake. If a few pounds creep up, get back on track by keeping notes of your food and activity level and identifying changes in your habits.