

The Lowdown

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COMPREHENSIVE WEIGHT LOSS CENTER

HURLEY

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As time passes after bariatric surgery, changes can follow. It is important to remember the basics listed below as these are the fundamental habits that are key to long term success!

Eat small meals. Each meal should not exceed more than 1.5 cups of measured total food volume. Meals should include a lean protein, non-starchy vegetable, and small portion of a fruit or whole grain, high fiber carbohydrate.

Eat and drink slowly. Meals should be consumed over a 20-30 minute period. Be sure to take small bites and take the time to chew each bite thoroughly. Continue to take small sips, no chugging. Long-term, 8 ounces of fluid should take 30-60 minutes to drink.

Do not drink fluids with meals. Do not sip fluids for 30 minutes before and after a meal.

Keep a daily food journal. Food logging keeps you accountable. "Baritastic" is a free mobile app that is easy to use! Even hand writing food choices and recording portion sizes is a great place to start.

Focus on protein. Eat protein first at a meal time to promote fullness and maintain muscle mass. Although individual needs may vary, a general recommendation is approximately 80 grams of protein per day.

If you don't tolerate it, avoid it! There may be some foods you do not tolerate following surgery, and that's okay! Be sure to avoid them in order to prevent damage to your GI tract.

Stay well hydrated. Drink fluids consistently throughout the day, aiming for a minimum of 48-64oz fluids daily. Water is always the best choice!

Take your supplements. Lifelong daily bariatric-specific vitamin and mineral supplementation is necessary to prevent nutritional deficiencies.

Plan ahead and be prepared. Make grocery lists and menus. Pre-prepare your food to avoid fast foods/processed foods. Read food labels.

Make time to exercise. Even just 5 to 10 minutes per day of planned exercise is a good start!

Seek out support. Support group meetings are held at the Hurley Comprehensive Weight Loss Center each month.

Focus on Fitness

Zone 2 Cardio

Slow and steady wins the race – a phrase we have heard time and time again. In regards to exercise, sometimes it feels like if we aren't out of breath and sweating bullets, we aren't really benefitting from the exercise. However, when it comes to burning fat, this is not always the case! Zone 2 cardio focuses on light to moderate intensity throughout your workout that maintains 60% to 70% of your maximum heart rate. If you don't know what your maximum heart rate is, all you have to do is subtract your age from 220.

When your heart rate is higher, your body uses carbs in the form of glycogen/glucose for energy. This is due to the lack of oxygen that occurs (being out of breath) when your heart rate is higher and when you have less oxygen, your body will turn to quick energy sources such as glycogen (carbs). When your heart rate is slightly lower (zone 2), your body will prioritize burning fat for energy.

Therefore, sweating and/or being completely out of breath are not the only signs of an effective workout. Working out in zone 2 can be very beneficial in regards to burning fat. Common examples of zone 2 cardio include brisk walking, steady cycling, rowing, swimming, and light jogging.

by Hannah Welter, RDN

Energizing Your Plate!



We have all heard that iron plays an important role in our bodies, but what does it actually do? Most noticeably, iron helps energize us, however it also has other key functions such as supporting blood health. Our bodies release stored iron to create hemoglobin which helps to carry oxygen throughout the body in red blood cells. Therefore, when the body's iron stores drop too low, hemoglobin levels decrease resulting in poor energy, strength, and stamina. Low iron can also lead to brittle hair and nails, dry skin, and a weak immune system. Common symptoms of low iron include but are not limited to the following:

- Unexplained fatigue/low energy
- Feeling cold
- Pale or yellowish skin
- Brittle or spoon-shaped finger nails
- Hair loss
- Cravings for ice or dirt
- Headaches, dizziness, or lightheadedness

Iron deficiency is of higher prevalence after bariatric surgery due to the malabsorptive and restrictive processes that occur. This is why lifelong iron supplementation is recommended after surgery. If you think you have low iron levels, reach out to your healthcare provider or the providers at the Hurley Comprehensive Weight Loss Center as iron studies can be done to determine if this is true. From there, different recommendations in regards to diet changes or supplementation can be discussed!

One way to increase your iron levels is via your food choices. There are two forms of iron: heme and non-heme. Animal foods such as lean meat, poultry, and seafood provide both forms and are more easily absorbed. Non-heme iron is also found in plant based food such as dark leafy greens, legumes, nuts and seeds, and fortified grain products. Furthermore, eating Vitamin C-rich foods alongside iron-rich foods can help to increase the iron absorption at meal times! Vitamin C-rich foods include options such as citrus fruits, tomatoes, strawberries, kiwis, and red bell peppers.

Ultimately, to ensure adequate iron intake, it is important to include a variety of iron-rich foods in our meals however supplementation can be considered, which is often necessary after bariatric surgery.

Spotlight on Success



**Rachael Before & After
Sleeve Gastrectomy**

My name is Rachael and in January of 2024 I had the gastric sleeve with Dr. Farhan. My bariatric journey has been about much more than just losing 113 pounds. I have reclaimed my health and my life. Upon beginning this journey, I committed to becoming the healthiest version of myself for me, my husband, and my children. I chose to leave behind processed, fast, and convenience foods and embraced a more holistic lifestyle centered on nourishing my body with whole foods. I grow much of my families produce and raise meat on our land, striving to eat as organically as possible. I prioritize protein, stay consistent with my vitamins, hydration, and food logging.

In February of 2025, after reaching my goal weight, I made the decision to undergo reconstructive plastic surgery with Dr. Saab at Hurley. This additional surgery has allowed me to move more comfortably and confidently. Today, I am no longer dependent on medications for diabetes, high blood pressure or cholesterol, and my psoriasis symptoms have resolved. I spend my days gardening, preserving the food we grow, hiking our forest trails, and caring for our animals—activities that once seemed impossible. My family's unwavering support, along with the exceptional care I received from Dr. Farhan, Dr. Saab, and their teams, helped me build a healthier, stronger future. I no longer simply focus on losing weight—I have embraced a holistic lifestyle that I hope to enjoy for many years to come.



High Protein Dill Ranch

Yield: 16 servings

Serving Size: 1 Tablespoon

Ingredients:

1 cup low-fat cottage cheese (can sub nonfat Greek yogurt)
2 Tbsp ranch seasoning
1-2 Tbsp milk of choice (to thin to your desired thickness)
1 ½ Tbsp pickle juice
5-6 pickle slices, diced small
1 Tbsp fresh dill

Instructions:

1. Add all ingredients to a blender and blend until smooth.
2. Store in a jar with an airtight lid in the refrigerator. The ranch will last as long as the expiration date of the cottage cheese or Greek yogurt.
3. Use as a dip with fresh vegetables, as a salad dressing, or on sandwiches, wraps and more!

Nutrition information per serving (Ranch per 1 Tbsp):

17 calories, 2g pro, 2g carb, 0g fat, 0g fiber



Oatmeal Energy Bites

Yield: 12 servings

Serving Size: 1 ball

Ingredients:

1 ½ cup rolled oats
½ cup chocolate or vanilla protein powder of choice
½ tsp cinnamon
1 Tbsp chia seeds
½ cup natural peanut butter
3 Tbsp raw honey
1 tsp vanilla extract
2-4 Tbsp milk of choice

Instructions:

1. Add oats, protein powder, cinnamon, and chia seeds to a bowl and stir until well mixed.
2. To the same bowl, add peanut butter, honey, and vanilla extract. Stir until well combined.
3. Slowly add the milk to the mixture and continue to stir. Add up to 4 Tbsp of milk or until the mixture can start to form into a structured ball shape.
4. With your hands, roll mixture into 12 even balls.
5. Place in a container to set in the fridge for at least 30 minutes.
6. Enjoy. Store in the fridge.

Nutrition information per serving (Per 1 energy ball):

139 calories, 9g pro, 12g carb, 7g fat, 2g fiber

**** Tip:** Prep these at the beginning of each week to have a quick and easy pre-workout snack! ******

Now offering a med-based nonsurgical medical weight loss program!

The Hurley Comprehensive Weight Loss Center offers a med-based nonsurgical medical weight loss program. This program is designed for individuals who are not interested in surgical weight loss, but would like to see if anti-obesity medications, such as Wegovy, Zepbound, Adipex, etc., are a good option for them. If you know of someone who may be interested in this program, have them call our clinic at 810-262-2330 for more information.

Medical Nutrition Therapy is available!

Did you know you can work 1-on-1 with a Registered Dietitian at our clinic? Working with a RD for Medical Nutrition Therapy can help you learn what your personal calorie and macronutrient intake should be, better understand how specific foods affect weight loss/gain, learn to manage food temptations, and more! MNT is highly recommended if you are struggling to meet your weight goal. Call our office at 810-262-2330 for more information as coverage for MNT services can vary based on your individual insurance plan.

Support Group:

Join us for our monthly support group! This is open to both pre- and post-surgery patients! The support group meets the 1st Monday of every month from 5:30 - 6:30PM at the Hurley Comprehensive Weight Loss Center (with exception of inclement weather/holidays). No need to pre register — just come! Call 810-262-2330 for details.