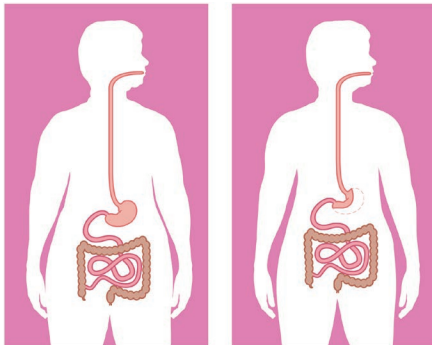
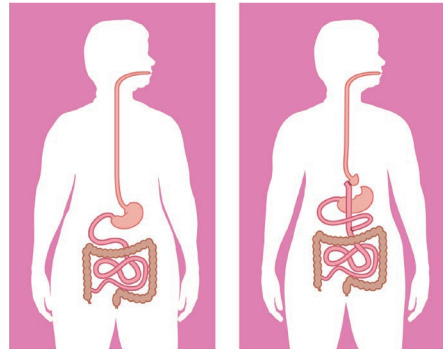


# Information on stomach bypass or stomach reduction surgery

What can I expect?

What do I need to do?



**Bariatrics: gastric bypass and gastric sleeve**

# Contents

## Part 1

Stomach bypass or stomach reduction	4
What are the possible changes after surgery?	5
Stomach bypass (gastric bypass)	6
Downsides of a stomach bypass (gastric bypass)	7
Stomach reduction (gastric sleeve)	8
Downsides of a stomach reduction	9
Talking about issues with eating	10

## Part 2

Symptoms shortly after surgery	12
1. Stomach leak	13
2. Bleeding	14
3. Infection	15
4. Leg thrombosis	16
Get your legs moving – it is a must	17
5. Constipation	18

## Part 3

The first 14 days after surgery	20
Eating and drinking	20
Moving around	25
Medications	26
Ways of preventing pregnancy	28
What are the normal symptoms after having surgery?	29
When to call the hospital, symptoms not to ignore	30

## Part 4

Food, drink and exercise	32
Six recommendations to follow for the rest of your life	32



## Part 5

Possible future complaints	40
Stomach complaints	40
Not enough vitamins and minerals	41
Excess skin	32
Stress	43
Problems caused by eating	45
When to call the hospital, symptoms not to ignore	47
Food and drink list	48

## Part 1. Stomach bypass or stomach reduction



### Why choose surgery?

Being overweight is bad for your health.  
Stomach surgery can help you lose weight.  
This will also improve your health.

There are several possible surgeries.  
You and your doctor will decide to have surgery or not.  
And which operation.

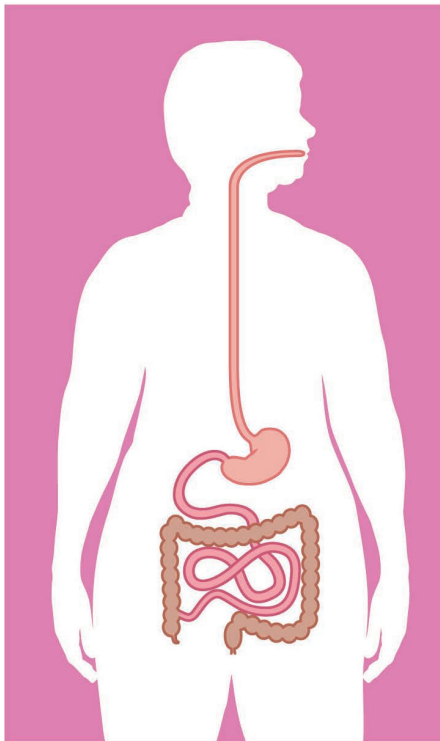
The most common surgeries are:

- A stomach bypass. We call this a gastric bypass.
- A stomach reduction. We call this a sleeve.

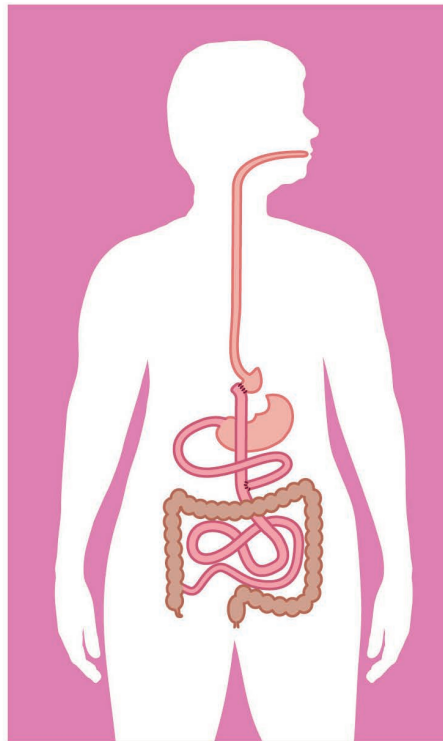


### **What are the possible changes after surgery?**

- You will lose weight.
- You will find it easier to move around.
- Your health will improve.
- You will be less tired or out of breath.
- You will need less medication.
- You will feel fit.



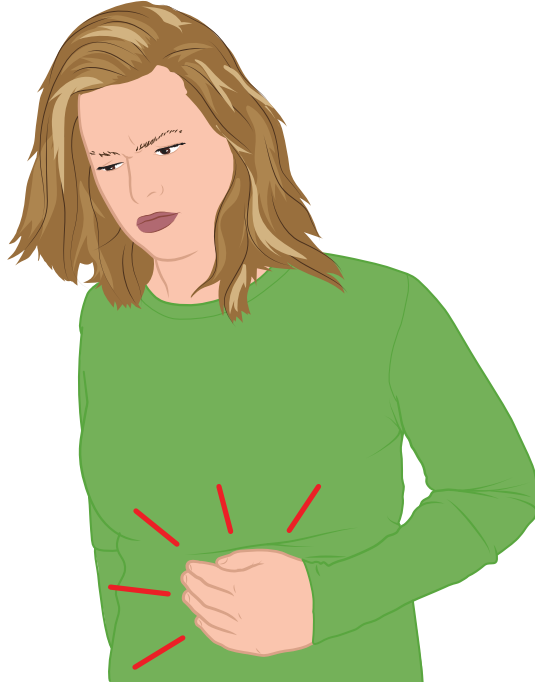
Before surgery.



After surgery.

### **Stomach bypass (gastric bypass)**

With a stomach bypass, the surgeon divides your stomach into two. Food and drink will only be able to reach a small portion of your stomach. It will now be the size of a kiwi fruit. The rest of your stomach will no longer be used. As a result, food and drink will enter your intestines much faster. It will be easier for you to eat less.



### **Downsides of a stomach bypass (gastric bypass)**

You may become very unwell and tired:

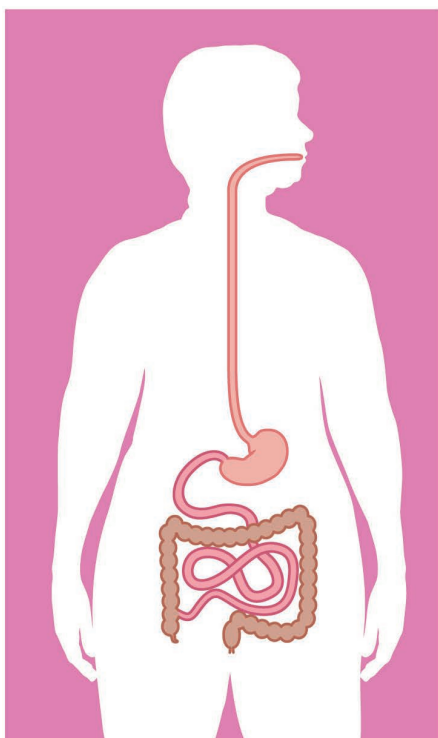
- if you eat or drink too quickly
- if you eat or drink too much
- if you eat or drink something too sweet, like soft drinks or biscuits
- if you eat foods that are too rich or fatty, like chocolate.

We call this 'dumping'.

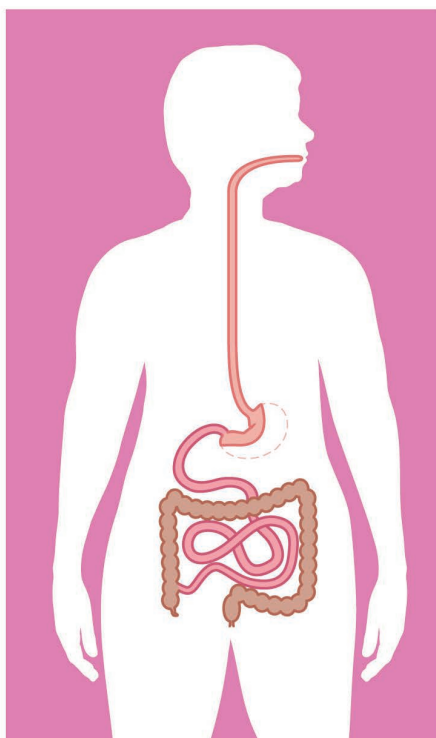
Other drawbacks are:

- You will have to eat and drink differently for the rest of your life.
- You should not become pregnant in the first 18 months after surgery.
- You should not fast. For example during Ramadan.

Once 5 years have passed, you can talk to your doctor about resuming fasting.



Before surgery.



After surgery.

### **Stomach reduction (sleeve)**

With stomach reduction surgery, a large part of your stomach is removed. Your stomach will then be as narrow as a banana. It will be able to hold far less food and drink, making it easier for you to eat less.





### **Downsides to stomach reduction surgery (gastric sleeve)**

You may experience

- nausea and vomiting
- heartburn. This causes a burning sensation and is painful.

You may also suffer from dumping syndrome, but this is rare.

If you occasionally experience heartburn,  
you may be better off choosing a gastric bypass.



## **Talking about issues with eating**

Do you have any of these issues?

- You eat a lot quickly and then feel nauseous.
- You want to stop eating, but cannot.
- You feel bad after eating. You feel ashamed or guilty.

You can talk about these issues.

For example, with your doctor, nurse practitioner or a psychologist at the hospital. They will be able to help you.

**First you have to deal with your issues with eating.  
Only then will surgery be possible.**

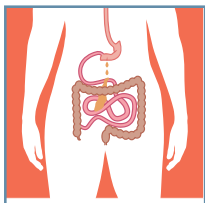
Talking is also important if you feel anxious or unhappy before the operation. This could also be caused by an addiction.

You may also feel guilty after eating only a little. You can mention this too.



## Part 2. Symptoms shortly after surgery

You may experience these symptoms shortly after surgery:



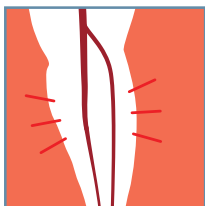
1. Stomach leaking



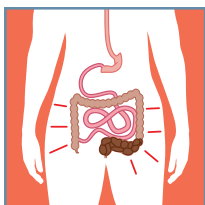
2. Bleeding



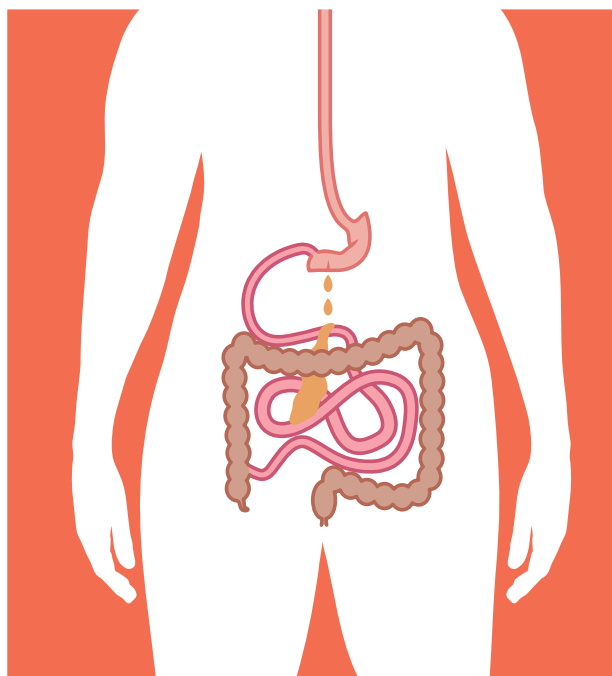
3. Infection



4. Leg thrombosis



5. Constipation



Stomach leaking

## 1. Stomach leaking

If the small wounds in the stomach or intestines fail to heal properly, a leak may develop.

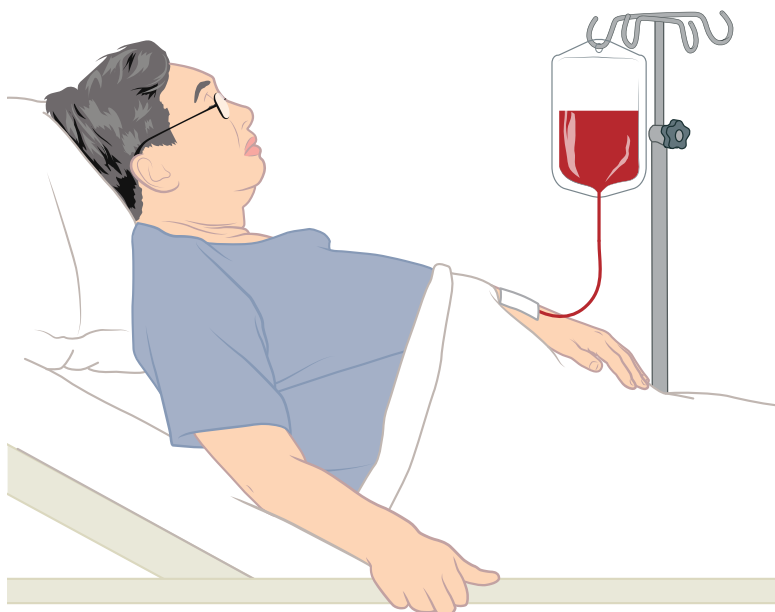
Stomach acid, digestive fluid or poo can get into the stomach.

That causes an infection.

This is dangerous and painful.

If this does happen, you will be operated on again quickly.

The surgeon will seal the leak and clean the stomach.



## 2. Bleeding

You may have bleeding after surgery.

You will see a bruise around the small wounds.

You may also experience these symptoms:

- stomach pain
- vomiting
- blood in your poo. It will be black in colour.

If necessary, you will be given extra blood.

You may need another operation.



### 3. Infection

You may develop an infection after the surgery.

For example in your lungs or bladder.

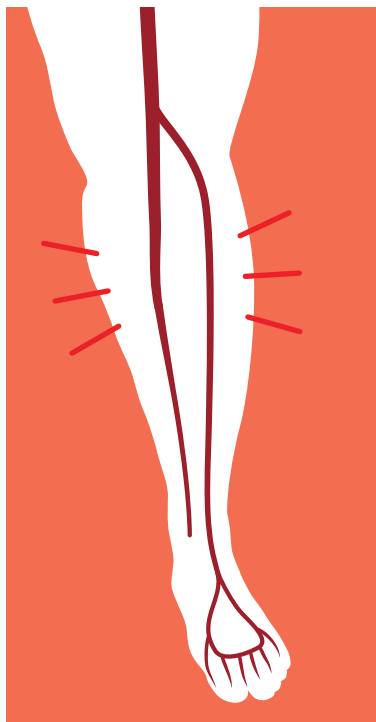
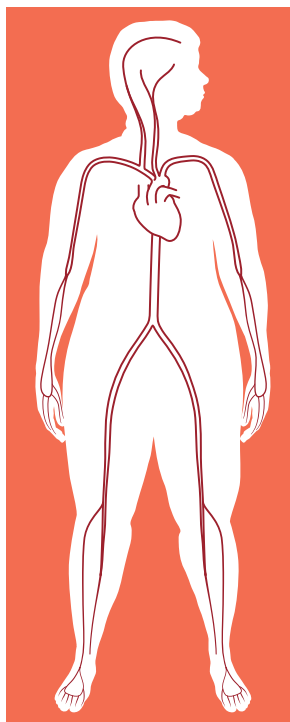
Wounds can also become infected.

Your doctor will check your health.

You may be given antibiotics.

Tell your doctor if you are allergic or over-sensitive to antibiotics.

**To avoid developing problems with your lungs:  
breathe in and out deeply. Do this 3 times every hour.**



#### 4. Leg thrombosis

Leg thrombosis means that blood does not flow properly through the veins in your lower leg.

A blood clot gets stuck in a blood vessel.

Your calf swells and becomes painful.

The blood clot can break loose and can travel to your lungs.

This is a lung embolism and it is dangerous.

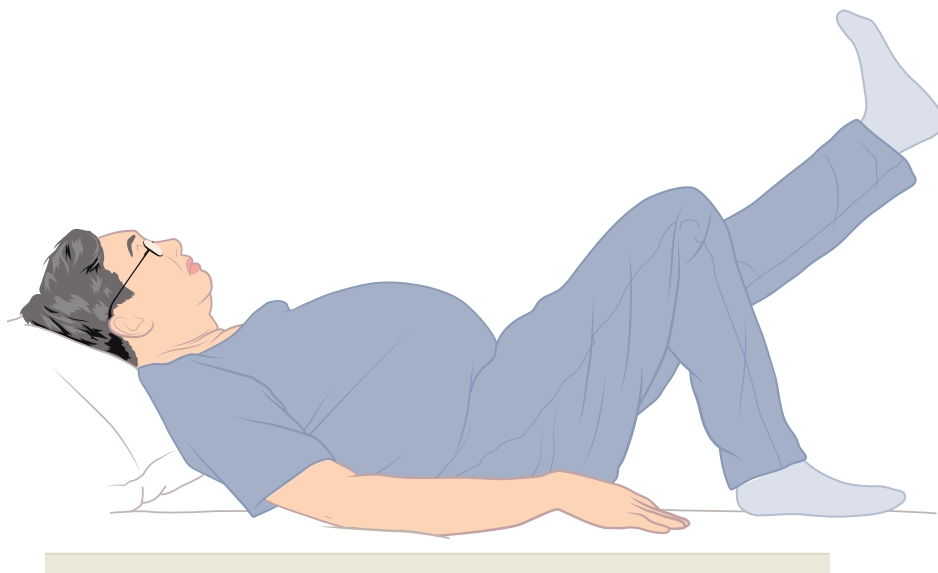
#### Injecting medication

The first few days after surgery,

you will inject yourself with an anti-thrombosis drug.

Hospital staff will explain how to do this.



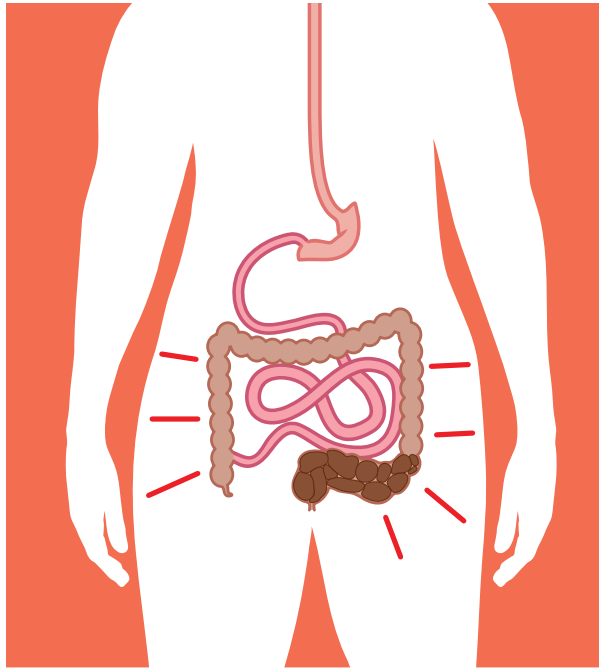


### **Move your legs – it is a must**

It is important to move your legs.

You will need to do this:

1. Get out of bed and walk around.  
Do this 3 times each day, 10 minutes at a time.  
You can also walk more often and for longer.
2. Lie on your bed and bend your knees and flex your ankles.  
Next, straighten your knees and stretch your ankles.  
Do these movements as often as possible.



## 5. Constipation

Sometimes, poo gets stuck in the intestines.

You may have difficulty pooing or may poo less often than usual.

Eating and drinking becomes difficult.

You may experience:

- cramping
- pain
- vomiting

If you do, tell your doctor.

Symptoms will often go away on their own.

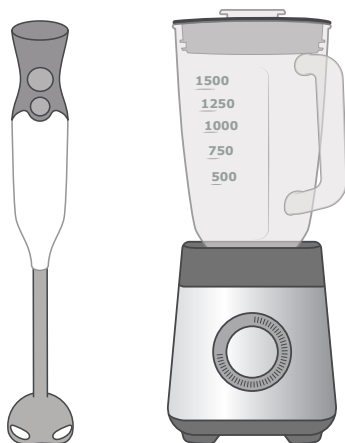
Sometimes you get medicine.

Sometimes you need surgery.



## Part 3. The first 14 days after the surgery

### Eating and drinking



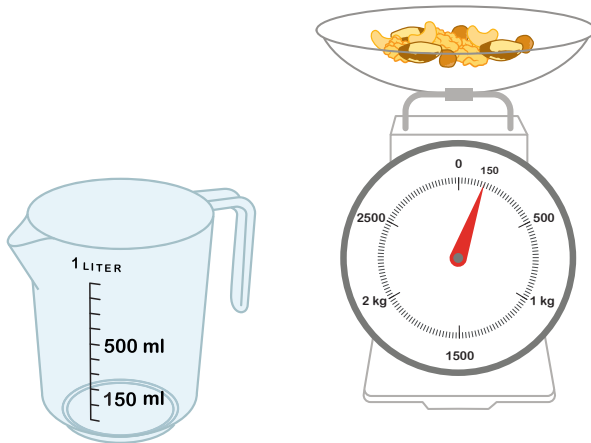
After surgery, you should eat soft and liquid foods.  
Blend your food until it is completely smooth.



Do not eat sugar.  
Do not put sugar in your drinks.



Do not have drinks with your food.  
Do not eat food while drinking beverages.  
Wait 30 minutes between eating and drinking.



Eat a small portion 6 times a day.  
Each meal must contain protein. Protein is found in cold cuts, cheese, milk, buttermilk, yoghurt and fresh cheese.

Weigh your food with kitchen scales.  
Use a measuring cup for your drinks.

## **Sample menu for the first 14 days after surgery**

### **Breakfast**



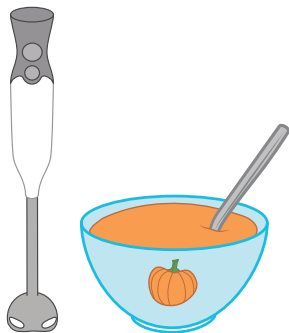
- 150 ml of Brinta porridge

### **Between meals**



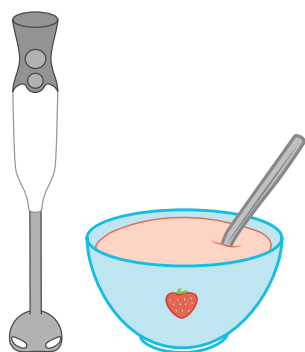
- 150 ml buttermilk

## Lunch



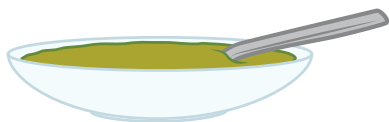
- 150 ml pumpkin soup with cooked chicken  
Put the vegetables and chicken in a blender or use a hand blender.

## Between meals

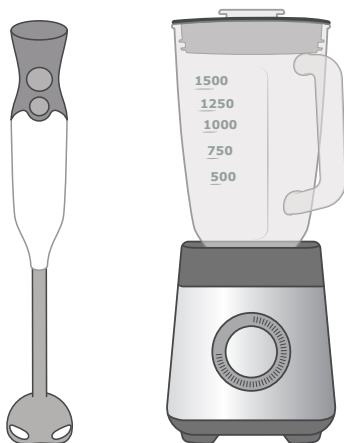


- 150 ml fresh cheese with strawberries  
Blend until completely smooth.

## Dinner



- 50 g of broccoli
- 50 g of potato
- 50 g of cooked fish



Blend using a blender or hand blender until completely smooth.  
Use your own herbs for extra flavour.

## Between meals



- 150 ml semi-skimmed milk

You may drink coffee, water and tea.  
Coffee creamer or semi-skimmed milk is allowed.  
1 sweetener is allowed.

**Drink 1.5 liters or more every day.**

**Note: Wait 30 minutes or more between eating and drinking.**





## **Moving around**

Keep moving during the day.

Do not lie in bed during the day. Do not lie on the couch either.

Do small jobs around the house.

Go for a 10-minute walk or a bicycle ride 3 times a day. Longer is also allowed.

Do not lift children or heavy objects for the first few weeks.

Do not do stomach muscle exercises.

## Medications



### Medication to prevent thrombosis

After the surgery, you will inject a blood thinner into your stomach or thigh every day. This is important to reduce the risk of thrombosis.

Hospital staff will explain how to inject yourself.

Your doctor will also tell you for how long you will need to do this.



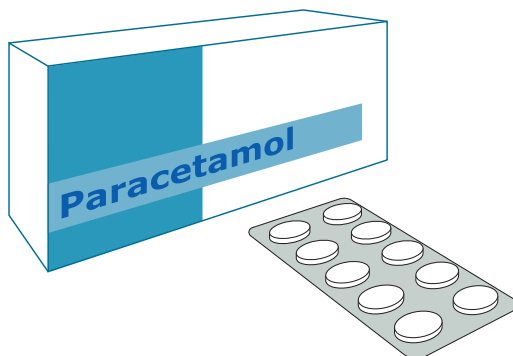
### Heartburn medication

After surgery, you will take 1 tablet every day to help prevent heartburn. Swallow the tablet whole.

You will take this medication for 3 months.

Most people can stop after this.

Do not stop taking this medication without talking to your doctor first.



### **Pain medication**

Note: Read carefully what it says on the packet.

If you have **500 mg** tablets?

Take these doses in case of pain:

- morning: 2 tablets
- afternoon: 2 tablets
- evening: 2 tablets
- at night: 2 tablets

If you have **1000 mg** tablets?

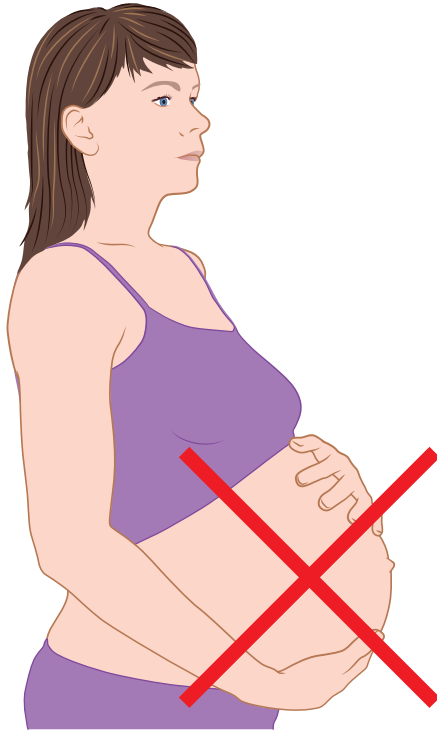
Take these doses in case of pain:

- morning: 1 tablet
- afternoon: 1 tablet
- evening: 1 tablet
- at night: 1 tablet

You can also choose a tablet that is put inside the anus.

### **Other medications**

Your doctor will tell you about other medications after the surgery.



## Ways of preventing pregnancy

**Please note:** You must not become pregnant after the surgery.

Always use a form of contraception to avoid pregnancy.

The best method is an injection or a coil.

The pill and condoms are less reliable.

The nurse practitioner can help you choose which form of contraception to use.

You may become pregnant in these situations.

1. 18 months after the surgery.
2. You have been the same weight for 6 months or more.
3. You have talked to your doctor about your wish to have children.

Pregnant after all?

Immediately call your doctor at the hospital where you had surgery.



### **What are the normal symptoms after the surgery?**

These symptoms are normal during the first week:

- You cannot poo

After 1 week, you will be able to go to the toilet again.

These symptoms are normal during the first 2 weeks:

- stomach pain
- nausea

Both the pain and nausea will lessen each day.



### **When to call the hospital, symptoms not to ignore**

- fever of 38.5°C or higher
- painful and swollen calf
- constant vomiting
- black poo
- blood in poo
- shortness of breath
- severe pain in your stomach
- fainting



## Part 4. Food, drink and exercise

It is important that you follow these recommendations starting from now. This will help you get used to eating, drinking and exercising after surgery.



### Recommendation 1

Do not have drinks with your food.

Do not eat food while drinking.

Wait 30 minutes between eating and drinking.

You may drink coffee, water and tea.

With or without semi-skimmed milk or coffee creamer and a sweetener.

**Drink 1.5 liters or more every day.**



## Recommendation 2

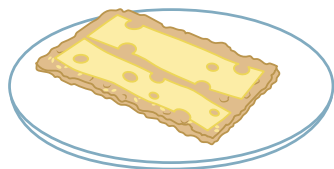
Eat a small portion 6 times a day.

Each meal must contain protein.

This is found in cheese, milk, buttermilk, yoghurt and fresh cheese.

## Sample menu

### Breakfast



- 1 whole-wheat crispbread
- halvarine
- 1 large slice of 30+ cheese

### Between breakfast and lunch

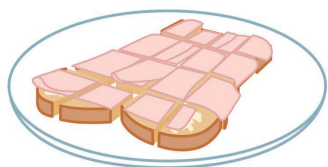


- 150 ml yoghurt or low-fat fresh cheese
- and 50 g of fruit

Or

- 1 whole-wheat crispbread
- halvarine
- 1 large slice of 30+ cheese

## Lunch



- 1 whole-wheat sandwich in small pieces
- halvarine
- 2 slices of cold meat, for example ham or chicken breast

Or

- 2 whole-wheat crispbreads
- halvarine
- 2 slices of cold meat

## Between lunch and dinner



- 150 ml low-fat fresh cheese
- and 50 g of fruit
- Tip: add 2 tablespoons of granola without sugar  
(read the granola label carefully)

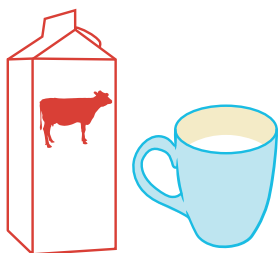
## Dinner



- 60 grams of lean meat or fish or chicken
- 75 to 150 grams of cooked vegetables
- 2 boiled potatoes  
or 50 grams of cooked brown rice or 50 grams of cooked whole-wheat pasta

**Note:** You do not have to eat everything.  
The meat is the most important element.

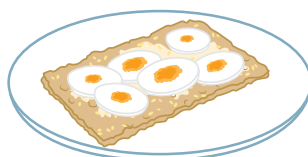
## Between meals



- 150 ml buttermilk

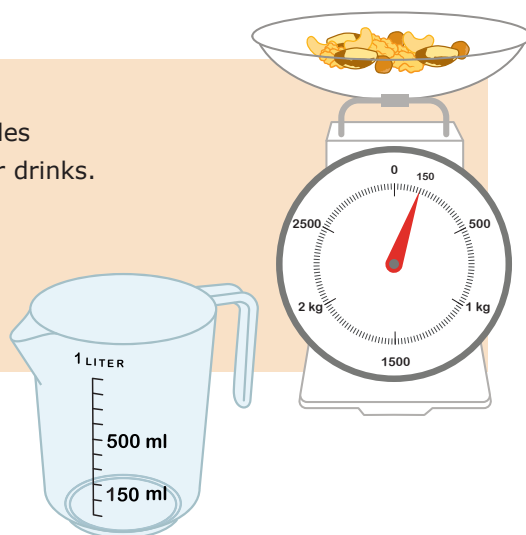
Or

- 1 whole-wheat crispbread
- halvarine
- boiled egg



Weigh your food with kitchen scales  
and use a measuring cup for your drinks.

You may also eat less than 150 g  
and drink less than 150 ml.





## **Eat slowly**

### **Recommendation 3**

Take your time to eat and drink.

Eat at the table.

Do not eat in front of the television.

Also, put away your mobile phone or tablet.

It is important to chew your food well.



## No sugar

### Recommendation 4

Do not put sugar in your food or drinks. Do not use honey either. Do not have food or drinks that contain added sugars. For example, cruesli and biscuits, including Liga biscuits.



## Vitamins and minerals

### Recommendation 5

Take a multi-vitamin and mineral tablet every day. Your dietitian or doctor will tell you which tablets are good. Talk to your doctor or dietitian about it.

**Please note:** The tablets are not paid for by your health insurance.

Tell your dietitian or doctor which vitamins or minerals you are taking. Bring the bottle with you to your appointment. Not all tablets are good for you.



## Exercise

### Recommendation 6

Get 45 minutes of exercise every day.  
Longer periods of exercise are also allowed.

Try:

- walking
- cycling
- swimming
- fitness at the gym

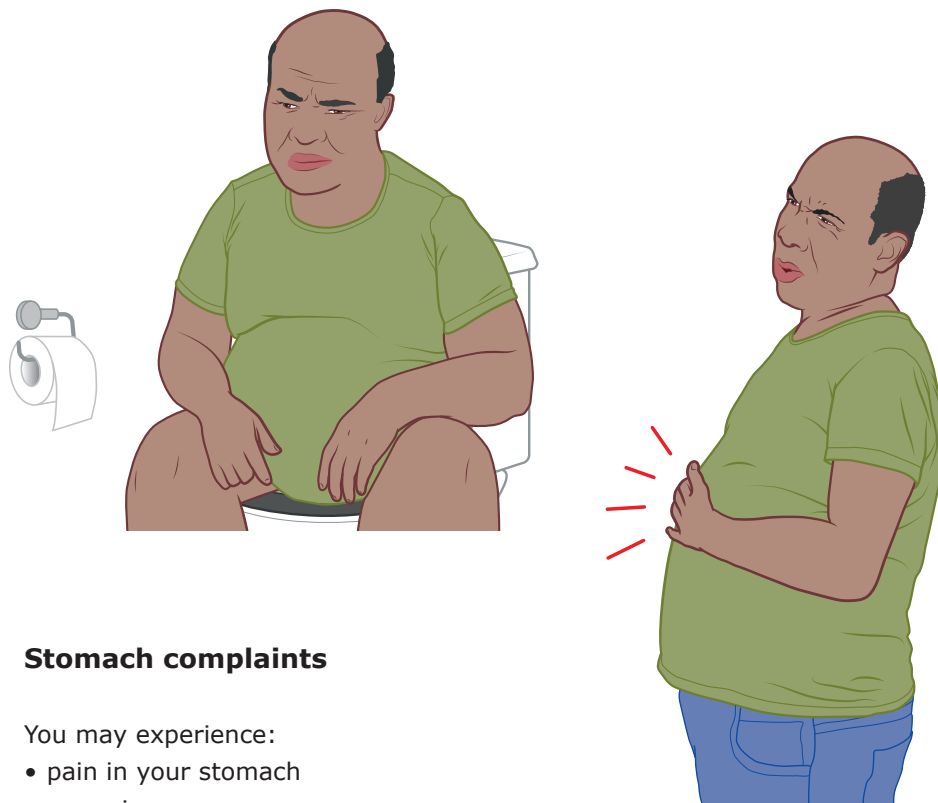
Exercise is a good stress reliever.  
It also helps you maintain your weight.

Do you find it difficult to stick to the recommendations?  
Call your local dietitian.



## Part 5. Possible future complaints

You may get these complaints a few months after surgery.



### **Stomach complaints**

You may experience:

- pain in your stomach
- cramping
- frequent runny poo
- constipation

Follow the dietitian's advice on eating, drinking and exercise.  
This way, you are less likely to have stomach issues.

In some cases, the pain after surgery has a different cause.  
For example, a stomach ulcer or gallstones.  
Always tell your doctor about any complaints you have.





### **Not enough vitamins and minerals**

Take a multi-vitamin and mineral tablet every day.  
Your dietitian or doctor will tell you which tablets are good.

**Please note:** The tablets are not paid for by your health insurance.

Every year, you will need to have a blood test at the hospital.  
Your doctor will then see if you need any more vitamins.



## Excess skin

Losing weight can leave you with loose skin.

The skin may sag, for example, around your abdomen, breasts, buttocks, upper arms and legs.

This can be troublesome.

Sometimes, the loose skin can be removed during surgery.

This will be done by a plastic surgeon.

**Note** that this surgery is often not paid for by health insurance.

Talk to your doctor about this.



## **Stress**

After surgery, many things will change for you.  
Your body will change and you will need to eat differently.

This may cause you stress.  
You can feel afraid or unhappy.  
It may cause you to sleep poorly or tire easily.  
You may also feel like drinking more alcohol or start smoking.

If you do experience any of the above,  
talk to your doctor or psychologist.  
Talk to friends and family too.  
Or with people who have had the same surgery.



Did you feel anxious or unhappy before the surgery?  
Or do you have an addiction right now or have had one before?  
Those symptoms or issues may worsen after surgery.  
The hospital psychologist will work out a plan with you to help you deal with them.



## **Problems caused by eating**

### **Problems with eating too fast and not chewing well**

Food may get stuck in your gullet.

This is unpleasant and hurts.

The pain will often go away on its own.

### **Issues caused by eating too much**

You may suffer from heartburn.

This happens mainly after stomach reduction surgery.



### **Issues with foods that are too sweet or fatty**

For example, soft ice cream, fruit juice, milkshakes or chocolate.

You may suffer from dumping:

- headaches
- trembling
- sweating
- yawning
- feeling weak
- dizziness
- frequent runny poo

This is especially common after a gastric bypass.

The symptoms can last for hours.

Follow the advice of the dietitian on eating and drinking.

This way, you are less likely to suffer from complaints.

Eat 6 meals a day in small portions and eat slowly.



### **When to call the hospital: symptoms not to ignore**

- In case of severe stomach pain or stabbing pain.
- In case of vomiting.
- If you can no longer eat and drink.

## Choose food and drink from the list below

### **Bread and porridge**

- whole-wheat bread
- whole-wheat rusk
- whole-wheat crispbread
- whole-wheat pitta bread (small)
- muesli without sugar
- Brinta (porridge)

### **Bread toppings** (per serving: no more than 20 grams)

- Feta cheese 22+. The word 'light' appears on the label.
- goat's cheese
- mozzarella
- nut butter or peanut butter
- cottage cheese (hüttenkäse)
- steak tartare spread
- trout or other fish
- boiled egg
- 1-egg omelette or scrambled eggs

### **Milk and yoghurt** (150 ml)

- 0% Greek yoghurt
- Ayran. This is a Turkish dairy drink made with yoghurt, salt and water.
- semi-skimmed fresh cheese. The label has the words 'milde kwark' on it.
- yoghurt or yoghurt drink with 0% fat (check packaging)

### **Grains and potatoes** (50 grams)

- whole-wheat couscous
- bulgur wheat
- brown rice
- cassava
- sweet potato



**Meat, fish, chicken or vegetarian** (100 grams or less)

- lean beef mince
- 2 small meatballs in tomato sauce (homemade)
- fish without breadcrumbs
- chicken-thigh-filet
- boiled egg
- 1-egg omelette or scrambled eggs
- Meat substitutes. Read the label carefully. It must contain at least 15 grams of protein per 100 grams.

**Try cooking with herbs for extra flavour!**

## Credits

This booklet was developed by specialists in internal medicine, nursing specialists, psychologists, dietitians and surgeons from the Baria Nederland team at the Spaarne Gasthuis, board members of the Jan P. G. van Ooijen Foundation, staff of the Pharos Expertise Centre on Health Disparities and language ambassadors from the ABC Foundation.

The project was funded by the Jan P.G. van Ooijen Foundation.



**Design:** Zwerver grafische vormgeving

**Illustrations:** Medical Visuals, Maartje Kunen ©

© December 2021

© October 2025 English translation

*We have taken the utmost care with this publication. However, no rights can be derived from its contents. The Jan P. G. van Ooijen Foundation, the team at Baria Nederland of the Spaarne Gasthuis and Pharos employees are not liable for any direct or indirect damages resulting from the use of the information obtained through this publication. No part of this publication may be reproduced and/or disclosed by print, photocopy, microfilm or otherwise without prior written permission.*

**Please contact any of those involved if you have any questions and comments.**



