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POST OP DIET #4
(Regular Food)

By now you are about six weeks after surgery and are doing well. It is thus permissible to eat most anything you want, including meats. Remember, chunks of meat can plug up the outlet of your pouch and obstruct it. At that point one of two things will happen. Either you will vomit or the meat will slowly putrify and rot until it gets slimey enough to slid out of the pouch and into the intestine. Either way, not good for your pouch. So, **chew well**. Remember, tiny bites, 2-3 at a time, chew well, swallow, then wait awhile to be sure you feel OK before having another bite. Feelings of a lump in your throat, heartburn, nausea, or fullness are typically signs of a full pouch. Thus, wait until that sensation goes away before having another bite of food. Remember, the new opening from your stomach to the intestines is very small and you want to be sure the food will pass through without causing problems.

Before you know it, you will be able to eat anything that you want. Everyone advances at a different pace; so don't compare yourself to others! You will eventually get there. At first, just stick to the foods that go down well, and try something new every few days. Remember, you can't see into your pouch. It's going to have good days and bad days. One day you will be able to eat just about anything you want with no problem and the next day you may vomit everything you try. This is normal. Just remember to go back to liquids for a day. There is really no food that is "bad" for your pouch. While we encourage you to wait on certain foods and beverages, eventually everything is fair game. An example of this is carbonated beverages. In the beginning, the gas they produce can fill the pouch and result in your not eating enough. now you can try them and will probably be able to tolerate them.

If you experience vomiting throughout the day after eating a meal, the opening from your stomach to the intestines may be blocked. In that case, stop eating solid foods and go back to liquids only. Take small amounts slowly much as you did when you first went home from your gastric bypass operation. Do this for an entire day and then on the next day start adding back the foods you had been taking. If that does not work, then you should call us. After a day, if you are still vomiting, you need to call us for further advice.

Several Months Later.

When you are 6 - 9 months out you will notice a significant increase in the amount that you can eat. This is normal. It does not mean that your pouch has stretched too much. It means that food is now moving out of the pouch and into the intestine faster than it did previously. So when you are eating the last half of a meal, the first half has already left the pouch. Now you will be able to eat 4 - 5 small meals a day instead of grazing all day.

If your weight loss stops before you are happy with it, or you begin to gain weight, there are some things to keep in mind. Fats, proteins, and **complex** carbohydrates, such as pasta, rice, bread, and potatoes, are not easily absorbed. Because of your bypass you will never absorb all of those that you consume.

However, **simple** carbohydrates, such as table sugar (sucrose), glucose, and corn syrup (fructose) will be completely absorbed without being bypassed. These are sweeteners that are frequently added to **many** types of foods and beverages. So watch out for them. Read the labels on prepared foods. If it tastes really sweet, then it is probably a simple sugar and should be avoided. Some of these high sugar foods include:

- Twinkees
- Donuts
- Chocolate cake
- Pie
- Ice cream in any form
- Various pastries
- Carbonated non diet drinks
- Non carbonated non diet drinks like Gator Aid or Clearly Canadian.

Therefore, try to limit the intake of these items simply because of the large amount of **simple** sugar that goes into them. Basically, if you can restrict your diet to meats, vegetables, and fruits and avoid foods with a lot of sugar, you will maintain your weight loss more easily.

Eating Out.

Eating out is a simple part of life. You need to know how to make healthy food choices when eating out. There are several things you can do to help make it an enjoyable and relaxing experience. Some suggestions are:

- Plan ahead. Choose places to eat where you know there are some healthy choices.
- Keep copies of menus from your favorite restaurants.
- Decide what you will eat before you arrive, selecting items you know will be safe and that you can tolerate.
- Do not be afraid to ask about certain foods or make special requests. Most restaurants are very accommodating.
- Avoid fried foods. Ask if fried items can be baked or steamed to avoid excess fat.
- Share a meal to split with your companion.
- Ask for a "to go" box when your food arrives to set most of it aside to take home.
- Do not eat everything on your plate.
- Drink alcohol in moderation. It has a lot of calories and can contain a lot of sugar.
- Order an appetizer as a main meal.
- Avoid eating at buffets, unless you know you can resist eating too much.

Alcoholic Beverages.

Lastly, alcohol is also absorbed quickly in both the pouch and the intestine. So be careful if you drink alcoholic beverages. A small amount will go a long way.