

# West Coast Bariatric Surgery

## Getting Started

Following these tips is the key to success with bariatric surgery.

We strongly recommend starting these steps well in advance of your first appointment with the multidisciplinary team.

**Remember, when reviewing these tips, the primary goal is to gradually introduce lifestyle changes. Gradual changes to food intake and exercise is essential to your long-term success after surgery. By making changes slowly, you will increase the likelihood that these changes will last for the rest of your life.**

Surgery is just the tool to reach your goals for weight loss and health improvement. We believe that long-term success after weight loss surgery strongly depends on lasting changes to what we eat and how we exercise!

1) Carefully review the contents of this website. Another website our patients find useful is [www.obesityhelp.com](http://www.obesityhelp.com). Some patients have also found books such as "Weight Loss Surgery for Dummies" to be helpful.

2) Start a diary (this can be in the form of a booklet, recorded on the computer or on a mobile phone app - many of our patients have found [www.fitday.com](http://www.fitday.com) to be very useful).

- Write down daily food and beverage intake including types of foods, beverages and condiments. Record the quantities of each (e.g. grams, tablespoons, ounces, etc.). Don't forget to record snacks too as these types of foods are often an overlooked source of calories.
- Write down daily exercise activities including type of exercise and times
- Record your weight once a week (first thing in the morning, on the same day and using the same scale).
- This diary is crucial to success! It allows patients and the members of the team to track progress and find areas where positive changes can be made
- Bring the diary to EACH AND EVERY APPOINTMENT with members of the multidisciplinary team. Motivation and commitment are keys to being considered for bariatric surgery. Forgetting your diary shows a lack of both.

3) Dietary tips to get started

- Make slow, progressive changes to your food intake. Remember the goal is durable, long-term change.
- Gradually limit meals eaten at restaurants and fast-food outlets. You have much better control of the food you eat when you buy it and cook it yourself. Don't shop for

groceries on an empty stomach – this helps to avoid impulsive decisions.

- Focus on fresh foods in the grocery store. These are a much better alternative to processed foods. Fresh foods are most often located along the outer aisles of a grocery store, while processed foods are located in the centre. If it comes frozen in a package and needs the microwave to cook it, it's often not the best choice.
- **Get into the habit of reading labels. The more knowledge you have about foods you are eating, the more control you have over making healthier choices.**
- Eat breakfast, lunch and dinner at similar times every day. Remember – breakfast really is an important meal that should not be missed.
- Plan your meals the night before - again, it is very difficult to make good food choices when you're hungry! Planning ahead helps to prevent impulsive food choices.
- Separate solid foods from liquids by 30 minutes and vice-versa.
- Liquids should be limited to water, tea, skim milk and diluted, light cranberry juice.
- Drink 6-8 glasses of water a day.
- Food and drinks to avoid – It is obvious that some foods such as fried food and fast food are high in calories. Here are some items that you might not know are also high in calories that - jams, pop (diet pop is ok), juice, alcohol, condiments (including ketchup).
- You will meet the Dieticians at the Garratt Wellness Center – they will review your diary and provide expert guidance on how to shop for food, how to cook your food and when to eat your food.

#### 4) Exercise tips

- As with dietary changes, the goal is to gradually introduce exercise in a safe way in order to slowly condition your body and avoid injury.
- Focus on cardiovascular exercise – not weights.
- Dedicated time should be set aside for exercise. Cleaning the house or walking around at work doesn't count!
- Start with walking, swimming or walking in the pool. Begin with 10-15 minutes at a time and gradually work your way up to 30-40 minutes a day, 6 times a week.
- Don't forget to record this in your diary.
- You will speak with the members of the Physical Activity Line (PALs) at the Garratt Wellness Center – they will provide expert guidance on safe exercise techniques.

## 5) Researching Surgery

- Choosing the type of surgery that is right for you is an important step. You will meet with Dr. Nguyen and Dr. Sampath to discuss the types of surgeries, their benefits and their risks. Please review the description of each type of surgery on our website before you meet the surgeons. You can also read patient testimonials on our website and on [obesityhelp.com](http://obesityhelp.com).

## 6) Change Ways program

- Our Occupational Therapists and former patients have collaborated together to start a lifestyle education course called “Change Ways”. This class is an excellent resource for learning about the changes that you will experience after bariatric surgery and developing coping strategies to deal with these changes in positive way.

## Meeting the Team

We have assembled a world-class multidisciplinary team to help you with your goals of weight loss and health improvement. These dedicated health-care professionals are a valuable resource throughout the surgical process. Their knowledge and experience will help guide you through the pre-operative assessment as well as after surgery. To help ensure your long-term success, you will continue to see us on a regular basis indefinitely after surgery!

The pre-operative assessment process will begin with a meeting between you and one of the surgeons – Dr. Nguyen or Dr. Sampath. At their office, you will fill out questionnaires and then discuss the results together. You will continue to meet the surgeons regularly until the date of surgery. Your progress will be reviewed and surgery discussed at these follow-up appointments.

Bring your diary to this appointment and every subsequent meeting with the members of the multidisciplinary team.

Depending on the progress you have made prior to meeting the surgeons (see the section on “Getting Started”), you will be referred to other members of the multidisciplinary team.

Members of the team include dietitians, exercise physiologists, internal medicine doctors, anesthesiologists, respiratory therapists, occupational therapists and psychiatrists to name a few. Customized referrals to these health care professionals will be made depending on each patient’s needs.

Ensure that you are on time for appointments with the multidisciplinary team.

Multiple diagnostic tests will be ordered. These include U/S imaging, blood work and gastroscopy.

You will also be tested for sleep apnea (a serious breathing disorder that is often found in obese patients). If you are diagnosed with sleep apnea, you will be fitted with an apparatus called a CPAP machine. It must be used every night.

Diligent use of the CPAP machine improves quality of restful sleep. More importantly, it helps to decrease the chance of cardiac and respiratory complications after surgery. Failure to use the machine may result in delay or cancellation of surgery.

The pre-operative assessment process with the multidisciplinary team typically takes 3-6 months. During this time, we will continue to encourage lifestyle modification with dietary changes and daily exercise. We call this period of lifestyle modification the “Pre-conditioning Phase”. In the Pre-conditioning phase you will learn how to eat and exercise in a way that will ensure your long-term weight loss goals. Patients who are successful in completing the pre-operative assessment and who demonstrate significant lifestyle modification during the Pre-conditioning phase, will be considered for surgery.

Remember, bariatric surgery is just a tool and durable lifestyle modifications are necessary for long-term success. Take advantage of this time to optimize your health and make the lifestyle changes necessary to achieve and sustain weight loss after surgery.