

2-week pre-operative liver-reducing diet

Other formats

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You will need to follow a special diet for 2 weeks before your operation. This will cause short-term shrinkage of the liver which has been shown to reduce operative time and make the operation easier for the surgeon. It may reduce the risk of complications and reduce the chance of needing to convert from keyhole surgery (laparoscopic) to an open operation. This special diet is not required after the operation.

The liver is a heavy, fatty and immobile organ. It acts as a store for carbohydrate (in the form of glycogen). The diet is low in carbohydrates and significantly reduces liver storage of glycogen, making the liver smaller and softer. This enables the surgeon to retract the liver more easily and safely with less risk of bleeding and maximises the intra-abdominal space in which to carry out the procedure. You are likely to lose weight following this diet in addition to achieving short-term liver shrinkage.

It is important that you stick to the diet for 2 weeks before your operation. Do not be tempted to eat a large meal before surgery as this will reverse the positive effects of the diet on the liver.

General advice

- There are 2 diet choices available. Please decide on one of the diets and stick to this diet only. They include:
 - Diet Option 1. Liquid meal-replacement diet (e.g. Slimfast/similar)
 - Diet Option 2. Milk/yogurt-based diet
- Whichever diet you choose, you should have no other food or fluid during the 2 weeks. Spread your intake throughout the day rather than taking it all in the evening
- Drink a minimum of 2 litres of fluid daily and drink regularly throughout the day. This can include water, sugar free squash, Oxo, Bovril, tea and coffee. Do not add sugar to drinks. Avoid alcoholic drinks.
- Take a complete (A to Z) multivitamin & mineral tablet daily (milk & yogurt diet)
- Keep mobile, busy and active; walking is good

- Aim to have around 800 calories per day
- If you feel for any reason that you are unable to follow either of the suggested diet plans, then please contact the pre-operative assessment team for further advice. There are meal plans available for individuals who are unable to follow the Options below. Please contact the dietician team or pre-operative assessment team (contact details below)
- Avoid slimming bars and other diet products as they may not supply adequate nutritional needs
- It is common to feel tired and have a lack of energy on the diet. This often becomes easier after the first few days and remember, it is only necessary before your surgery

Medications

We advise that you inform your GP that you will be following this diet so they can check you will be safe to continue on your current medications.

Patients with Diabetes

If you have diabetes and are treated with medication that can cause hypoglycaemia (low blood sugar), you may need to reduce your medication dosage whilst on the diet. Please contact your diabetes nurse/practice nurse or GP if required before you start the diet.

Diet Option 1: Liquid meal-replacement diet

- These products may be milk shakes, smoothies or soups. Examples include Slimfast, Boots Shapers or supermarket own brands such as Tesco Ultraslim. Products contain vitamins & minerals and fewer than 250 calories per item
- Take 3-4 meal replacement shakes/smoothies/soups per day
- As much as you like of the following: water, tea/coffee (no sugar, milk within allowance above), no added sugar squash, sugar-free fizzy drinks, Oxo, Bovril

Diet Option 2: Milk & yogurt diet

Each day you may have:

- 3 pints of skimmed/semi-skimmed milk **and**
- 2 pots of diet yogurts (low fat & low sugar) e.g. Shape, Weight Watchers, supermarkets' healthy eating varieties containing around 60 calories (kcal) per pot
- One multivitamin & mineral tablet
- As much as you like of the following: water, tea/coffee (no sugar, milk within allowance above), no added sugar squash, sugar-free fizzy drinks, Oxo, Bovril

Further information/Contact details

Department of Nutrition and Dietetics
North Devon District Hospital
Telephone: 01271 322306

Pre-operative Assessment Department
Based in Bideford Hospital
Telephone: 01271 311542

PALS

The Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS) ensures that the NHS listens to patients, relatives, carers and friends, answers questions and resolves concerns as quickly as possible. If you have a query or concern call 01271 314090 or email rduh.pals-northern@nhs.net. You can also visit the PALS and Information Centre in person at North Devon District Hospital, Barnstaple.

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