

Pre-surgery Nutritional Education (obesity)

Nutrition plays a key role in patients' surgical recovery. Did you know that you could be nutritionally deficient even if you are overweight? It's true, inadequate nutrition is a risk factor for complications and longer hospital stays. It is very important to eat a healthy diet, especially when you are preparing for surgery. Let us begin with a few basics ...

- ▶ **Know your weight and Body Mass Index (BMI).** A BMI less than 40 is ideal prior to proceeding with surgery. Your surgeon and/or insurance provider may require a specific BMI to help improve your outcome. Talk with your Primary Care Provider (PCP) if you are unsure.
- ▶ **Weigh yourself weekly.** Try to use the same scale at the same time of the day for the most accurate reading.
- ▶ **If significant weight loss is necessary prior to undergoing surgery, we are here to help!** Discuss options with your PCP or surgeon, or call 717-255-6173 to meet with a UPMC Pinnacle Registered Dietitian.
- ▶ **Strive to eat three meals per day.** It is important to eat from ALL the food groups to achieve optimal health.
- ▶ **Monitor your portion sizes.** Try using smaller plates. Eat protein first with each meal.
- ▶ **Do not skip meals or starve yourself!** Healthy weight loss is achieved slowly. One to two pounds of weight loss per week is ideal.
- ▶ **Avoid in-between meal snacking and sweets.** If you are hungry between meals, try a cheese stick, yogurt, hardboiled egg, or vegetables to fill you up.
- ▶ **Drink 64 ounces of water per day unless advised otherwise.** Avoid high-calorie beverages such as juice, soda, and sweetened beverages. Remember, all calories add up!
- ▶ **Consider logging your foods, portions, and calories through a food journal.** This action increases accountability and improves success. My Fitness Pal is a great, free, online tool to try!
- ▶ **Get moving!** Activity is vital for a healthy body. Start slowly and increase each day. Walking is a great option. Find an activity that interests you. Consider using a fitness tracker or pedometer to track your steps and progress.
- ▶ **Be patient.** Celebrate your non-scale victories, too!
- ▶ **Small changes can lead to BIG health improvements for you.** Be patient and achieve your healthiest self!

