

My Dream Wedding

By Adrian Sayre

“Would you do this again? Even knowing what you know now?” I was asked this question recently about my Bariatric surgery, and as soon as the question was asked I knew what my answer would be, “Absolutely!”

There is one story that comes to mind when I think of how I can back up that decision. Six years ago, my husband and I got engaged, and a month later I went out and bought my dream wedding dress. Then, through the stress of wedding planning and life, I gained almost 70 pounds. The dress that I loved no longer fit me and couldn't even be altered to fit me. I had gained so much weight. My heart was broken. I went out to buy another dress, one that was beautiful and I liked, but it was not the dress that I loved.

On my wedding day, I was at my heaviest weight. Looking back on those photos, I do not understand how I let myself get to that point in my life. After we were married, life went on. We had a baby, bought a house, adopted way too many pets, and through it all I didn't ever hang our wedding photos on our walls. I was embarrassed of myself, and I didn't feel that those photos represented the real me or the way that my husband saw me or the way I wanted to see myself.

Adrian before Gastric Sleeve procedure Adrian after Gastric Sleeve procedure



Then, through a series of fortunate events, I was given the opportunity to have the gastric sleeve on August 31, 2016. A lot has happened since that day, including finding out I was pregnant again at six months post-op, which I do not recommend by the way. Then at 18 months post-op, my husband and I retook our wedding photos and I finally got to wear that original dream dress that I loved so much. I even weighed less when we took those photos than the day that I bought the dress.

The person in that original wedding photo is 100 pounds heavier and embarrassed of herself. While that woman in the second photo can chase her three-year-old around the back yard and not get winded. She can carry her newborn around the grocery store and not feel embarrassed. Most importantly, she finally sees herself the way that she always saw herself in her head.

If given the choice to go back and do it all over again, I would make all of the choices the same. The road to get to this place in my life was hard and full of pain, both physical and emotional. So, would I have the surgery again even knowing what I know now? Absolutely!

Compare the amount of vitamin or mineral in a serving in the amount per protocol. You may need more than one serving to meet the recommendations. For example, the serving on the bottle is two tablets and the label says there is 500mg in that serving (two tablets). Recommendations say you need 1000mg a day per day. You would take four tablets a day to reach 1000 mg each day.

Some forms of vitamins are better for weight loss surgery patients:

- Ferrous fumarate (iron)
- Calcium citrate (look for elemental calcium)
- Vitamin D3 (cholecalciferol)

Directions panel:

- Directions will provide instructions on how, when and amount to take of a given supplement.
- They will provide product care instructions.
- If they contain iron, they must have an iron overdose warning.
- They must contain an FDA disclaimer.
- The company's full address must be listed on each bottle.

Other items of note:

- The expiration date and lot number (manufacturing tracking number) must be listed.
- Start with chewable or liquid forms and advance to capsules (six to eight weeks after surgery). Continue with chewable vitamins if tablets not tolerated.
- Avoid time released or enteric coating.
- Avoid incomplete children's formulas or gummies.

If you ever have a question about the vitamins you are taking, please call or bring them to your next visit so we can look at them together.

Signs of Healthy Recovery & Moving Forward

By Kathleen Ford, ACSW, LCSW

Following Bariatric surgery (i.e., gastric bypass or gastric sleeve), adjusting and learning a new “normal” requires some changes to restructure your lifestyle and to develop healthy ways of managing life. It takes courage to let go of old ways of thinking, feeling and behaving. Be patient with yourself in developing these new skills. You may be required to change some patterns of daily activities that are no longer productive. It is not a question of whether they are good or bad; it is a question of what works and what doesn't work.

Following Bariatric surgery, many patients experience not only physical changes, but mental changes as well - especially in regard to improved self-esteem, self-confidence and enjoying being out socially.

I sometimes hear from patients that some family members and friends don't always respond in a supportive way. You might even experience negative feedback from family and friends because you are no longer doing the same things as before. You may even begin to feel guilty that you are feeling good and looking attractive. Don't get distracted, follow your program and keep focused on your goals. Here are some signs of healthy recovery and moving forward:

- Not feeling controlled by the past
- Not feeling guilty for taking the time to attend to self-care
- Recognizing your strengths
- Pursuing your life goals
- Overcoming obstacles
- Pursuing activities once previously enjoyed
- Getting out and enjoying life
- Feeling optimistic rather than pessimistic
- Attending to grooming and appearance

There are people and resources available to support your efforts to achieve a healthy lifestyle. Support groups are important to achieving your goals for weight loss and maintenance. In addition, find at least three “helping persons” whom you can talk to during the week either in person or by telephone. Return the favor and be a listener for them.

Weight Loss Surgery and Fitness

By Jean Koester, LPN

If you are considering weight loss surgery or have already had weight loss surgery, your commitment to adopting a physically active lifestyle, along with sustaining healthy eating habits, are critical to your long-term success. The important thing is to exercise to compliment your weight-loss efforts and sustain your fitness regimen injury free.

Excess body weight often restricts your ability to be physically active, and it is important for you to understand how to work around these mobility limitations. The number one reason you have had or will have weight loss surgery is to increase your health, thus your exercise program should complement the effects of the surgery.

Some things you can do to get moving include:

- Wash the dishes by hand
- Clean the house
- Park further away
- Try using the stairs

Start slow and gradually progress until you are exercising 60 minutes a day. Do aerobic exercise that is low to moderate in intensity. If you have major joint limitations in your lower extremities, try to perform most of your exercises from a seated position.

The best thing a weight loss surgery candidate can do to prepare themselves for both before and after surgery is to increase their level of fitness. The better cardiovascular condition before surgery, the fewer complications after surgery.

A lifelong exercise program is critical to a weight-loss surgery patient's long-term success. Bariatric surgery is a valuable tool for weight loss, but two to five years down the road, if a physically active lifestyle has not been maintained, the weight returns.

Exercise is insurance for long term weight loss. If you can stick to it you will be at a healthy weight and in good physical condition for years after your weight loss surgery.

Source: The Do's and Don'ts for a Successful Exercise Program. Weight Loss Surgery and Fitness, Dr. Julie Karlstead, Med, CSCS

Vitamin and Mineral supplements and reading supplement labels

By Corey Filbert, RD

Below is the current supplement protocol and tips on reading supplement labels.

Gastric bypass Recommendations

Chewable vitamins for the first six weeks after surgery

- Two complete adult multivitamins daily (children's chewable only recommended during the first six weeks)
 1. Each tablet/chewable with at least 100% recommended daily intakes -- each one tablet/chewable should have at least 19mg iron
 2. Take at different times of day to optimize absorption. Gummy vitamins are lacking many of the minerals the body needs and children's chewables are not recommended beyond the first six weeks after surgery
- 1000-1500 mg/d calcium citrate plus vitamin D daily
 1. Do not take calcium with the multivitamin. Calcium will inhibit absorption of iron in the multivitamin. Look for elemental calcium citrate.
- B12 sublingual 500 mcg per day
- Continue any additional supplements as recommended by your physician (i.e. iron, extra vitamin D, potassium etc.)

Gastric sleeve recommendations:

- One complete adult multivitamins daily (children's chewable only recommended during the first six weeks)
 1. Each tablet/chewable with at least 100% recommended daily intakes -- each one tablet/chewable should have at least 19mg iron
 2. Take at different times of day to optimize absorption. Gummy vitamins are lacking many of the minerals the body needs and children's chewables are not recommended beyond the first six weeks after surgery
- 1000-1200 mg/d calcium citrate plus vitamin D daily
 1. Do not take calcium with the multivitamin. Calcium will inhibit absorption of iron in the multivitamin. Look for elemental calcium citrate.
- B12 sublingual 500 mcg per day
- Continue any additional supplements as recommended by your physician (i.e. iron, extra vitamin D, potassium etc.)

Vitamin and Mineral supplement label reading tips:

Serving Size:

- Number of pills to take to get the amount listed on the label
- Serving size is different for many supplements and supplement brands
- Amount of a vitamin or mineral per serving must match (product cannot list the serving size as two tablets and list the amount of a vitamin per serving for one tablet)

% Daily Value (far right column)

- Amount of vitamin or mineral needed for most people
- Daily values are not specific for gastric bypass or gastric sleeve.
- Recommendations may exceed the % daily value after weight loss surgery for vitamins or minerals