

RETURNING TO WORK

Your return to work will be dependent on a variety of factors; with that said, most people are able to resume work 2-6 weeks following surgery.

Some factors that may effect your return to work include:

- The type of surgery you had
 - Most people with laparoscopic surgery can return to work in 2-3 weeks.
 - If you had an open surgery – and especially if your job requires lifting – it will be closer to 6 weeks.
- Personal limiting factors
 - Your pain and energy level may effect your return-to-work timeline. Pay attention to your body: only you will know if you feel well enough to work again.
 - Tip: Consider returning to work for half-days for the first couple of weeks.

YOUR FOLLOW-UP SCHEDULE

Follow-up appointments are extremely important to your overall success. Please schedule accordingly.

Time	You will meet with your:
1 week after surgery	Surgeon
6 weeks after surgery	Surgeon Dietitian
3 months after surgery	Surgeon Dietitian Routine Labs
6 months after surgery	Surgeon Routine Labs
1 year after surgery	Surgeon Routine Labs
Annual	Surgeon Routine Labs

You will also need to see your primary care provider at regular intervals (every 2-3 months) for the first year, then annually for routine wellness exams.

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Your Guide to the Bariatric Surgery Experience



Fairfield
Medical Center

This guide has been prepared to assist you and your family with understanding what to expect leading up to, during and after weight loss surgery.

CONGRATULATIONS

First and foremost, congratulations on taking this huge step towards a healthier life! You've done a lot of work to get to this point, and you should take a moment to appreciate the progress you've made so far.

The exciting news? The transformation is only beginning!

PRIOR TO SURGERY – TIPS AND CHECKLIST

In the week leading up to surgery, focus on making the necessary lifestyle changes and squaring away your post-operative plan. For example, if you live alone, you may want to make arrangements to have someone come help you during your recovery. If you live further than a 90-minute drive from the hospital, you may want to consider staying in the immediate area until after your first post-op recheck (one week after surgery).

You will need to confirm that you have a responsible, reliable driver available the morning of surgery. This person should plan on driving you to the hospital and staying for the duration of your surgery.

Additionally, take some time to mindfully pack your hospital bag. Staying in the hospital following surgery is necessary for a few days, and bringing some things from home can make your visit more comfortable. For example, plan to bring your favorite pillow, loose-fitting pajamas, slippers, a robe and your favorite entertainment. If you bring a laptop or tablet, Fairfield Medical Center does have WiFi; if you'd like to listen to music or watch videos, please bring headphones.

Week Before Surgery Checklist:

- _ Stop smoking if you have not done so already. Smoking increases the risk of surgical complications.
- _ Purchase the dietary supplements and groceries you'll need for the first stage of your post-operative diet.
- _ Review your nutrition and post-operative diet phases. (See your **Diet After Bariatric Surgery** guide and **Bariatric Services Reference Book** for more details.)
- _ Review your medications: if you are taking Coumadin, Aspirin, Plavix, NSAIDs or other anticoagulant or blood thinning medications, you should have made arrangements with your healthcare provider to discontinue these. Please stop taking them accordingly.
- _ Discontinue the use of hormone replacement and birth control pills. After your surgery, you may not be able to resume oral contraceptives. Discuss alternatives to birth control pills with your healthcare provider.
- _ You will likely require anywhere from 2-6 weeks off work. Use this time to make sure everything is in order. If you need help with any necessary paperwork, our office is happy to help.
- _ Notify your surgeon and the Bariatric Services Team if you feel unwell the week before surgery, including any evidence of a cold, sore throat or fever.
- _ Confirm your ride to and from surgery, and inform them of your post-operative plan.
- _ Pack your bags appropriately, including items of comfort and necessities, like your medication and CPAP/BiPAP machine.
- _ Take a deep breath, and prepare for your transformation.

DAY OF SURGERY

We understand that the morning of surgery can be nerve-wracking. Here's what you can expect the day of your procedure:

Day of Procedure Overview:

- Do not eat or drink anything after midnight the day before your surgery.
- Do not eat breakfast or drink coffee the morning of your surgery.
- Take medications as instructed by your physician with a small sip of water.
- The morning of your surgery, take a shower with antibacterial (i.e. Dial®) soap.
- Do not wear jewelry, makeup, or fingernail polish to the hospital.
- You can expect to arrive at the hospital approximately two (2) hours before your procedure.
- You will check-in at the Surgery Waiting Area located just inside FMC's south entrance.
- Lockers are available for belongings; as a precaution, we recommend leaving anything of significant value with a loved one.
- Please remember to bring your CPAP/BiPAP machine along with you.

DURING SURGERY

When it is time for surgery, you will be placed under general anesthesia: this means you'll be completely asleep and comfortable throughout the duration of the procedure.

Surgery will take approximately 1-2 hours. Your family is welcome to pass the time in the Surgery Waiting Area, where they can track your progress on a privacy-protected board. There will also be patient representatives available to answer any immediate questions your family may have.

IMMEDIATELY FOLLOWING SURGERY

Information

- The surgeon will meet with your family following the surgery.
- You will be transported to Surgical ICU (second floor) for recovery.
- You will remain in the Surgical ICU for 1-2 hours; the nurses will manage visitation during this time.
- After the initial recovery period, you will be transferred to Fairfield Medical Center's Bariatric Unit.
- You should expect to stay in the hospital for 1-3 days following surgery. Throughout your visit, you will be cared for by a group of specially trained nurses.

Equipment and Testing

- You will have a surgical drain in place. This will be removed at your first follow-up appointment, approximately one (1) week after surgery.
- While in bed, you will have compression devices placed on your lower legs. These devices help promote blood flow and prevent blood clots.
- An upper gastrointestinal (UGI) series will be performed following surgery. This test utilizes barium and imaging equipment to evaluate the upper GI tract and confirm there are no "leaks" following your procedure.

Diet & Medications

- Prior to your UGI, you will only be allowed a small amount of ice chips.
- Once the results of your UGI are read and approval is granted, you will begin consuming clear liquids.
 - Fluids will need to be consumed slowly, approximately 1 oz. every 15 minutes. Gulping will cause pain and nausea.

Comfort

- Immediately following surgery, pain will be managed with IV medications, carefully administered by a PCA (patient controlled analgesia) pump.
- Once you're able to tolerate liquids, you will be able to take pain medications by mouth.

IMMEDIATELY FOLLOWING SURGERY (CONT.)

Activity

- Walking is an extremely important part of your recovery. **You will be required to walk every four (4) hours starting the day of your surgery. This will occur around the clock, and is the single most important thing you can do to reduce your risk of complications. You will continue this at home.**

DISCHARGE FROM THE HOSPITAL

Before you leave the hospital, you will meet with our registered dietitian to review your progression through the post-operative dietary phases. You will also receive a complete set of discharge instructions. If you have any questions, don't hesitate ask.

WHAT TO EXPECT AT HOME

As with any surgery, there are some aspects of recovery that may be less-than-pleasant. Our team is here to help you every step of the way: listed below are some common post-operative side effects and tips on how to combat them.

- You will be required to take a PPI (proton pump inhibitor) medication –such as Prilosec® – for the first three (3) months following surgery.
- Some **pain** is normal, but most of it should be appropriately managed with the medications provided at the time of discharge.
 - **Medications you can take:** Tylenol, Tylenol Extra-Strength, Ultram (prescription – take with anti-acid)
 - **Do not take:** NSAIDs, Aspirin, Motrin/Ibuprofen, Prednisone (Steroids), COX-2 Inhibitors
- You may feel tired or **fatigued** following surgery. You should expect to have less energy than normal for the first six (6) weeks after your procedure; try taking a mid-day nap whenever possible.
- You should be able to consume liquids – slowly, a few sips at a time – without much difficulty, although a little **nausea** is normal. You will be sent home with an antiemetic (anti-nausea) medication.
 - **Medications you can take:** Prescribed antiemetic
 - **Do not take:** Pepto-Bismol
- Some patients experience occasional **vomiting**. If this occurs and becomes excessive, revert back to your previous dietary phase. Advance through each stage gradually and as tolerated. If there is a specific food that seems to aggravate your nausea, avoid it. **If you are unable to tolerate fluids for 24-48 hours, call our office.**
- **Constipation** may occur due to decreased food and fluid intake and the use of pain medications. While this is normal, it may be uncomfortable. Taking over-the-counter medications, such as Miralax, once in the morning and once in the evening may help. You can else try taking milk of magnesium three times daily.
 - **Medications you can take:** Milk of Magnesia, Colace, Peri-Colace, Dulcolax, Glycerin Suppositories, Fleet® Enema
 - **Do not take:** Pepto-Bismol
- **Diarrhea** isn't as common as some of the other side effects, but it's still considered normal. You may take over-the-counter medications to help symptoms; be sure to stay hydrated.
 - **Medications you can take:** Imodium AD
 - **Do not take:** Pepto-Bismol
- **Gas pains** may be relieved with over-the-counter medications.
 - **Medications you can take:** Gas-X, Phazyme
- While feeling under-the-weather isn't a side effect of weight loss surgery, life happens. If you feel unwell after your procedure, call your doctor. If you happen to get a **common cold** at any point after bariatric surgery, you may take the following medications to relieve symptoms.
 - **Medications you can take:** Robitussin, Dimetapp, Tylenol Cold Products, Triaminics, Sudafed and Benadryl

When at all possible, obtain sugar-free forms of the approved medications.