

Bariatric Surgery: It's STILL Not About the Food!

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Everyone agrees that bariatric surgery is a tool—not a quick fix. And like any other tool, it requires the skillful management by a knowledgeable user to work effectively.



Adjusting to a New Normal

Many people who decide to try bariatric surgery believe that they've tried everything else—but most have never even heard of mindful eating.

Some believe or hope that having bariatric surgery will solve all of their problems—but nothing could be further from the truth. For example, if you are an “emotional eater,” the situations and emotions that triggered eating in the past are unlikely to disappear simply because you've chosen to have bariatric surgery. As one patient said, “They didn't operate on my brain!”

Some discover that they “miss” their friend food, leaving them with a feeling of loss. As one person told me, “I've cut out my coping skill!”

Others believe that after surgery they won't need to think about their eating anymore. In fact, it's just the opposite. You need to become very thoughtful about eating in order to use this tool optimally to develop and maintain a healthy lifestyle. If you're *not* mindful about your eating, this

“tool” can cause you to experience uncomfortable, even serious consequences—and you'll be far less likely to get the results you hoped for.

Bariatric Surgery and Mindful Eating

Mindful eating is another essential tool for building a healthy lifestyle. Mindfulness is beneficial because it teaches us to focus our attention and awareness on what is happening right now, which in turn, helps us disengage from habitual, unsatisfying, and unskillful habits and behaviors.

Specifically, mindful eating skills help resolve the mindless habits and emotional eating issues that commonly lead to problems after bariatric surgery:

- Eating too quickly, taking large bites, and/or not chewing thoroughly
- Eating while distracted leading to overconsumption
- Not savoring food and therefore having difficulty feeling satisfied with small volumes of food
- Eating too much, leading to discomfort, vomiting, and/or distention of the pouch
- Grazing throughout the day and/or eating “slider” foods and high-calorie soft foods and liquids
- Emotional eating
- Not consuming enough protein and other nutrient-rich foods
- Feeling deprived or left-out in social situations
- Struggling to establish consistent physical activity

- Continue to struggle with the eat-repent-repeat cycle

Mindful eating is a life-changing concept that can help prevent, identify, and resolve these and many other problems in people who are having difficulty adjusting to their “new normal” after bariatric surgery.

Most people who make the difficult decision to have bariatric surgery want to improve their health and energy so they can live the vibrant life they crave. Yet without the additional tool of mindful eating, bariatric surgery can feel like a permanent diet that continues to consume your life.

One of the most meaningful changes that happens when you learn to eat mindfully (whether you've had surgery or not) is that it allows you to think about eating when you need to—and free up your energy and attention to focus on living in between.

After all, even after bariatric surgery, it still isn't really about the food!

Am I Hungry? Mindful Eating for Bariatric Surgery Program

For more help learning to eat mindfully after bariatric surgery, download a pdf of the table of contents and key concepts covered in the Am I Hungry? Mindful Eating for Bariatric Surgery Program: <http://amihungry.com/programs/mindful-eating-for-bariatric-surgery>

Facilitator Training for Am I Hungry?® Mindful Eating for Bariatric Surgery is also available. For more information, please visit: <http://amihungry.com/train-with-us/mindful-eating-for-bariatric-surgery-facilitator-training>