

# ON TRACK WITH BARIX

Support to Keep You On Track With a Healthful Lifestyle

## 12 Ways to Boost Energy

**ENERGY IS CONTAGIOUS: Either you affect people or you infect people. —T. HARV EKER**



**M**any people experience skyrocketing energy levels after weight loss surgery, which makes sense for several reasons. The body is no longer bogged down digesting large meals. Oxygen efficiency and the insulin/blood sugar process improve substantially, enabling cells to produce more energy. And it takes less work for your body to move around a smaller load, leaving a surplus of energy to tap into.

But what if that isn't the case? What if you find that you're dragging through the day? That occasionally happens. Here are 12 ways to move out of a slump and boost energy levels to new highs.

### 1. Allow Rest

It takes energy for your body to heal and adjust to changes in food intake after surgery. It is not uncommon to feel sluggish for the first 8-12 weeks. Listen to your body and take breaks to rest when needed. Sit down and sip on fluids or have a high protein snack. Avoid napping though, which can compromise a good night's sleep.

### 2. Drink More Fluid

Dehydration is a likely cause of fatigue in the weeks following surgery and even months or years later if care is not taken. Drinking at least 64 ounces of fluid a day is recommended. Extra attention is often needed to learn how to sip, rather than gulp, fluids and to drink regularly between meals. In addition to water, calorie free infused water or flavored water, broth, sugar free popsicles, sugar free gelatin, and other fluids help you to stay hydrated.

### 3. Reach Daily Protein Goals

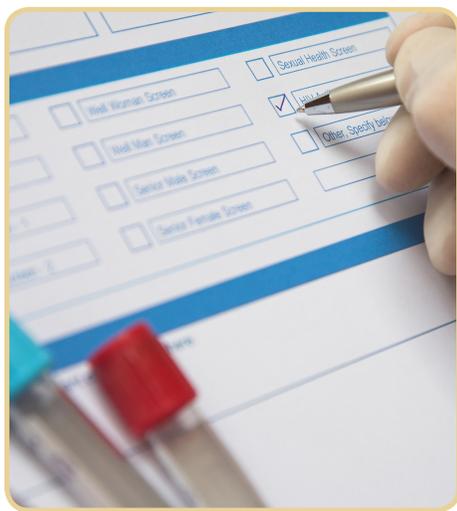
Protein helps to stabilize stress hormones, insulin and blood sugar levels for hours—keeping your energy high. Initially, protein needs are met with protein supplements, milk and smooth yogurt. As your body heals, a transition away from supplements to protein-rich foods such as lean meat, fish, poultry and low fat dairy products, will take place.

### 4. Eat Regular Meals and Snacks

Skipping meals can lead to a drop in blood sugar and a dip in energy. Be prepared to eat 6 small protein-rich meals—space meals 2 ½ - 3 hours apart. Even if you're not hungry, have something small at mealtime. A glass of milk (4-8 ounces), low fat string cheese, an ounce or two of deli meat, 1/2 cup of low sugar yogurt, or ½ of an apple with peanut butter are examples of quick and simple protein-rich small meals that will help to boost energy.

### 5. Take Proper Supplements

Limited amounts of food alone are not enough to meet the body's need for many specific nutrients—vitamin and mineral supplements are needed. The need for supplements does not diminish over time; nutrition deficiencies can occur months and years after surgery. It is much easier to prevent a nutrition deficiency or treat it in the early



stages than to wait until your body is showing signs. Your nutritionist will help you select supplements that best fit your needs.

## 6. Get Regular Lab Testing

Lab tests often find nutrition deficiencies before symptoms develop. Lab testing is recommended every 3 months the first year after surgery; then once a year for life. The surgeon and nutritionist will monitor iron levels, vitamin levels, protein status and more with these tests. Keeping nutrient levels within optimal range will help your cells to perform as intended and keep energy levels high. Common energy draining deficiencies include iron and vitamin B12.

- **Iron.** When iron levels are low, the blood carries less oxygen to cells, disrupting the energy cycle—leaving you feeling drained. There are several reasons why iron levels may be low after surgery.
  - Smaller food portions result in less iron consumption.
  - Meats, especially iron-rich red meats, can be difficult to eat after surgery.
  - Gastric acid, which enhances iron absorption, is decreased.

- Gastric bypass surgery decreases the intestinal area for iron absorption.

It's easy to see why this is an important nutrient to keep an eye on.

If you are diagnosed with iron deficiency, an iron supplement is usually recommended. For better absorption, look for ferrous fumarate, consider a chewable or liquid form, avoid enteric-coated or extended-release supplements, and take iron on an empty stomach at a different time than calcium supplements. Take iron with a few ounces of orange juice—the acidity helps with absorption.

Only take an iron supplement when lab test indicate a deficiency under the direction of your doctor or nutritionist. Follow-up lab testing to check progress and direct treatment is required. And just like many things in life--too much of a good thing can be bad as unmonitored iron supplementation can lead to toxicity.

- **Vitamin B12.** The body needs vitamin B12 to make red blood cells, nerves, DNA, and for many other essential functions. The body cannot make vitamin B12, so it must be supplied by food or supplements and then absorbed by the body. After weight loss surgery, it is very difficult for the body to absorb vitamin B12 through the digestive system. Because of this, deficiencies can easily develop. Sublingual (under the tongue) supplements or vitamin B12 injections are very effective at preventing, or correcting if necessary, deficiencies.

## 7. Exercise Optimally

Too much or too little exercise can cause fatigue. Start a walking or exercise program slowly and build endurance over time. Right after surgery, many benefit from short frequent walks throughout the day

rather than one long walk. Once cleared, typically 6 weeks after surgery, add in other types of exercise or simply continue to build on a walking program. Each week, add more time, more intensity, or new exercises. Before you know it, you'll find that the right amount of exercise boosts your energy to new heights.

## 8. Eat Right

Eat fresh, whole foods rather than highly processed foods. Whole foods tend to be higher in healthful nutrients, free of unwanted additives, and slower to digest—giving your body a steady stream of nutrients for energy production. Highly processed foods may give you a rush of energy and satisfaction, but an inevitable crash follows leaving you craving more.

## 9. Make Sleep a Priority

The National Sleep Foundation recommends that adults get 7 to 9 hours of sleep each night. Less than that and you'll feel drained. Good quality sleep is challenging for many. If you struggle, here are a few things to try:

- Follow a consistent bedtime routine.
- Get a full night's sleep every night.
- Avoid caffeine or any other stimulants before bedtime.
- Learn to let go of problems and be worry-free at bedtime.
- Don't go to bed hungry or too full.
- Avoid rigorous exercise within six hours of your bedtime.
- Make your bedroom quiet, dark, and a little cool.
- Get up at the same time every morning.

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## 10. Be Mindful of Emotions

Emotions can lift you up or weigh you down. Having realistic expectations and a positive perspective can make a big difference in the emotions you feel after surgery. Weight loss surgery, after all, is a big step with many drastic changes. It's natural to be more emotional right after surgery as the body adjusts to both physical and hormonal changes. There can be a sense of loss until new coping skills are developed for rewarding, comforting and entertaining without food. There are new eating and drinking habits to learn. Reach out to your support group—often just knowing that what you are feeling and experiencing is normal and temporary, makes you feel better. Seek out professional help if needed.



## 11. Manage Stress

We often think of negative situations causing stress, but change of any kind, positive or negative, can cause stress. It's not the change itself that causes you to feel stressed, but your perception of the change. Change can bring about fears of the unknown, fears of rejection, uneasiness about risk taking, difficulty coping with new circumstances or feelings of insecurity and vulnerability. Change can also bring about feelings of empowerment, excitement, hope, and anticipation.



### Tips for reducing stress:

- Plan ahead and get organized. Disorganization is a breeding ground for stress.
- Work to understand the situation. This will decrease the fear of the unknown, and better provide you with options to control, change or adjust to the situation.
- Check your attitude. Replace those negative thoughts with powerful, positive thinking. Our outlook on life can affect our physical and emotional health.
- Get regular exercise. Exercise is unequalled for releasing the tension of stress from our bodies.
- Don't shortchange yourself on sleep. Stress hormones can rise when you become sleep deprived.
- Talk it out. Expressing your anxieties or fears to a friend, therapist, or family member can be incredibly helpful.
- Stress isn't the event or situation; it's the reaction to that event or situation. Learn to react in ways that minimize the stress threat.

- Learn a relaxation method and take regular relaxation breaks throughout the day.

### Review Medications

Many medications require dosage adjustments after surgery, especially those used for diabetes and high blood pressure. If not adjusted properly, some may cause fatigue. Other medications have fatigue as a side effect even at the proper dosage. Be sure to keep in close contact with your primary care physician to direct medication adjustments after surgery and review any that may contribute to fatigue.

### Bottom Line

Improved energy levels are one of the many benefits that you should experience after weight loss surgery. If that's not the case, review the list above. You may be able to identify one or several reasons for your fatigue right away. If so, take corrective steps—consulting with your bariatric team and primary care physician as needed. We're here to help you achieve all of the benefits weight loss surgery provides. After all, you're more likely to be successful with your weight loss when you have the energy to be active and meal prep at home.



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Tell us about how your life has changed as a result of your weight loss surgery. Your story may be printed in this publication or on one of our websites and can serve as an inspiration to others.

**Submit your story online**  
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*We'd love to hear from you!*

## QUESTIONS ABOUT FINANCING YOUR SURGERY?

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**800-282-0066**

## Recipes

### Slow Cooker Fall Medley Soup

- 1 rotisserie chicken, all light and dark meat, shredded
- 1 cup quinoa
- 4 cups butternut squash, peeled, seeded and diced
- 1 can (15.25 ounces) organic black beans, rinsed and drained
- 1 can (15 ounces) low sodium corn, rinsed and drained
- 1 can (14.5 ounces) petite diced tomatoes
- 2 teaspoons minced garlic
- 1 packet Mrs. Dash fajita seasoning mix
- 5 cups low sodium chicken broth

Rinse the quinoa in a fine mesh strainer. Coat your slow cooker with nonstick spray. Add in all ingredients and stir. Cover and cook on high for 3-4 hours or until the quinoa is cooked through and the squash is very tender. Makes 8 servings.

**Nutrition information per serving:**  
342 calories, 29 grams protein, 8 grams fat, 42 grams carbohydrate, 450 mg sodium.



### No-Bake Pumpkin Cheesecake

- 2 8-oz packages fat free cream cheese, softened
- 1/3 cup sweetener
- 1 8-ounce tub light whipped topping
- 1 cup canned pumpkin
- 1/2 teaspoon pumpkin pie spice
- 1 teaspoon vanilla
- 1 prepared graham cracker piecrust

In a mixing bowl, combine cream cheese, Splenda, whipped topping, vanilla, and

pumpkin pie spice; beat until fluffy. Add pumpkin and mix well. Pour into graham cracker crust and chill until set. Serve when cold. Garnish with whipped topping, if desired. Makes 8 servings.

**Nutrition information per serving:**  
233 calories, 12 grams protein, 8 grams fat, 29 grams carbohydrate, 165 mg sodium.

*Dear Stress,  
Let's break up...*