



**University
Hospitals Sussex**
NHS Foundation Trust

Protein and Bariatric Surgery

Patient information

The importance of protein

What is protein?

Proteins are the basic building blocks for the body. They are made of amino-acids and are found in every cell, tissue and organ in the human body.

Why is it important following Bariatric Surgery:

- It increases satiety (the feeling of fullness) when eating smaller portions.
- It helps you heal after surgery.
- It helps to preserve more muscle mass while losing body fat.
- Helps to keep blood sugars stable.

What happens if I don't get enough protein?

Not consuming adequate protein may cause your body to break down its own protein stores (muscles) to meet its needs. Your body burns more energy digesting protein than it does other nutrients, therefore a poor intake may lead to an earlier weight loss plateau. Signs of inadequate protein intake can include delayed wound healing, frequent infections, weakness, increased hair loss/thinning and dry/brittle nails.

How much protein do I need after surgery?

After having bariatric surgery you should aim to consume 60-80g protein a day. This may be difficult to achieve immediately following surgery, due to the small amount of diet that you are able to take. Ensure that each meal and snack is based around protein. By 3-6 months, your protein target should be split between 3 or 4 meals, aiming for 20-30g protein in each meal.

High protein milk

You can use high protein milk for a few weeks after your bariatric surgery if you feel you are not getting the recommended protein intake. High protein milk provides an additional 20 gms of protein per pint of milk and can be used with your cereals, in teas/coffees, sauces and soups.

Item	Protein
60g or 4 dessertspoons of skimmed milk powder	21g
568ml or 1 pint skimmed milk	20.4g
568ml or 1 pint high protein milk	41.4g

The following recipe is for high protein milk:

Ingredients:

- 1 pint or 568ml of skimmed milk
- 60g or 4 heaped dessertspoons of skimmed milk powder.

Method:

1. Measure 1 pint skimmed milk into a measuring jug.
2. Put the skimmed milk powder into a bowl and gradually add the measured skimmed milk, mixing to a smooth paste with a whisk, wooden spoon or hand blender until all the skimmed milk is added and you have a smooth liquid with no lumps.
3. Keep the high protein milk in the fridge and use within a 24 hour period.

Source of Protein

Dairy / Alternative milk	Amount	Protein
Milk	200 ml	7g
Skimmed milk powder	20g	7g
Soya milk	200ml	6g
Almond Milk	200ml	0.8g
Yoghurt (dairy/ soya)	150g	7g
Low fat Greek strained yoghurt e.g. Skyr	150g	12g
Hard cheese – for example cheddar	25g	6g
Low fat cottage cheese	75g	10g
Low fat soft cheese	75g	6g

Meat and Poultry	Amount	Protein
Beef	75g	22g
Lamb	75g	22g
Pork	75g	22g
Chicken	75g	22g
Corned beef	75g	19g

Beans/Lentils/Vegetarian Protein	Amount	Protein
Beans	200gl	12g
Baked beans	200g	10g
Lentils – cooked	100g	8g
Spilt lentil - cooked	100g	8g
Quorn	75g	8g
Nuts	25g	5g

Eggs and Fish	Amount	Protein
Eggs	2 large	16g
Fish (fresh/tinned)	75g	18g
Prawns	75g	17g

Meal Plans

The portion sizes and meal pattern mentioned below are likely to be reached by 6 months post surgery.

Day 1	
Breakfast	1 Weetabix with milk
Snack	Small handful of nuts
Lunch	Salad with chopped boiled egg & cheese
Snack	Hummous & 2 crackers
Dinner	Shepherds Pie with vegetables
Snack	Hot cocoa made with milk

Day 2	
Breakfast	Scrambled egg & 1/2 toasted potato cake
Snack	Fruit
Lunch	Jacket potato with beans
Snack	Cheese spread with melba toast
Dinner	Fishcake with vegetables
Snack	Small handful of nuts

Day 3	
Breakfast	Grilled bacon & 1 slice toast
Snack	Fruit & yoghurt
Lunch	Lentil soup
Snack	Rice crackers with peanut butter
Dinner	Poached white fish, vegetables & rice

Notes

- Always eat the protein portion on your plate first.
- During the first few weeks after surgery, to increase protein further, add one to two dessertspoons of dried skimmed milk powder to a portion of strained soup, yoghurt or low fat custard.
- Read labels and compare products to achieve low sugar and high protein choices.
- Protein powders, shakes and bars are not necessary and can often be high in fat/sugar. Aim to meet all requirements through the food choices mentioned earlier in the booklet.

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Ref. number: 2144.1
Publication date: 10/2025
Review date: 10/2026

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