



Blood tests and nutritional supplements following bariatric (weight loss) surgery

This leaflet is for patients who have had bariatric surgery (weight loss surgery) and outlines how often you will need blood tests and what supplements you should be taking and when. Bariatric surgery can change the way you absorb certain nutrients so you will need to take specific vitamin and mineral supplements and have regular bloods tests for the rest of your life to reduce the risk of nutritional deficiencies. Your GP is your contact person for any blood tests and prescriptions, but it is your responsibility to organise these.

Blood test calendar

Blood test	After surgery			
	At 3 months	At 6 months	At 1-year	Annually for life
Full blood count	✓	✓	✓	✓
Urea and electrolytes	✓	✓	✓	✓
Liver function test	✓	✓	✓	✓
Ferritin	✓	✓	✓	✓
Folate	✓	✓	✓	✓
Vitamin B12	✓	✓	✓	✓
Corrected calcium	✓	✓	✓	✓
Vitamin D	✓	✓	✓	✓
Parathyroid hormone (PTH)	✓	✓	✓	✓
Zinc	x	x	✓	✓
Copper	x	x	✓	✓
Selenium	x	x	bypass only	bypass only

Vitamin and mineral supplements

- For the first week after surgery, any vitamins or medications that you take **must** be in liquid form. However, it is not essential to take vitamins during this very early phase.
- You will need to buy a Vitamin B Complex supplement from a shop or pharmacist.
- You will need to buy an A-Z Multivitamin supplement from a shop or pharmacist, if your GP is unable to prescribe this. Ensure it is of high quality using the information provided in the table below.
- If your blood tests indicate abnormalities, you may need to take extra supplements – your dietitian, nurse or GP will advise you on this.

Vitamin and mineral supplement recommendations


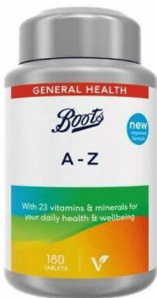
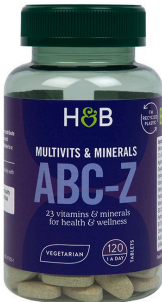

Vitamins	Comments
Vitamin B Complex	TAKE DAILY for 3 months <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • You will need to buy 'over the counter' • Only needed for the first 3 months after surgery • Take 1 a day
Complete A-Z vitamin & minerals tablet	TAKE DAILY for life <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • You may need to buy over the counter • You may need to take 1 or 2 tablets • Total of 2mg Copper • Plus total of 15mg Zinc • Plus total of at least 400mg Folic Acid
Combined supplement of Calcium + Vitamin D3 tablet	TAKE DAILY for life <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Your GP should prescribe these • Contains 1000/1200mg calcium • Plus 20/22µg Vit D3 per day
Iron supplement tablet	TAKE DAILY and adjusted after blood tests <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Your GP should prescribe these • Dose may be adjusted or stopped if no iron deficiency • 1 tablet a day (210mg) • 1 tablet twice a day (420mg) for pre-menopausal women
Vitamin B12 injections	INJECTION EVERY 3 MONTHS for life (NOT REQUIRED for Endoscopic sleeve gastroplasty) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Should be given at your GP surgery • 1mg injection • Starting 6 months after surgery

Suitable brands of vitamin and mineral supplements

It is likely that you will need to purchase a high quality A-Z Multivitamin, which you will need to take lifelong. For most multivitamins that you can purchase, you will need to take them twice a day. Although, there are some options that you would only need to take once a day.

ONCE A DAY vitamins		
		
Forceval Capsules Can be prescribed by GP	Healthspan Multivitality 50 Plus Tablets Available online	FitForMe Capsules Different options for type of surgery Available online

If you are taking a different multivitamin and minerals supplement to the 'Once a day' ones above, it is likely that you will need to take that supplement twice a day. Ensure that you choose a multivitamin supplement that contains at least 23 vitamins, minerals and trace elements (this is usually highlighted on the packet). Please check the 'Vitamin / Mineral supplement recommendation' table on page 2 for specific details.

TWICE A DAY vitamins			
			
Sanatogen A-Z Complete Multivitamin Tablets Available in chemists and online	Boots A-Z with Minerals Tablets Available in store and online	Holland & Barrett Multivits & Minerals ABC-Z Tablets Available in store and online	Tesco A-Z Multivitamins & Minerals (and most supermarket options) Tablets Available in store and online

Suggested time to take my supplements:

To ensure the best absorption of your vitamin and mineral supplements, you should spread them throughout the day.

Morning	A-Z multivitamin Calcium + Vitamin D3
Mid-day	Iron (if needed)
Evening	Vitamin B Complex 2 nd A-Z multivitamin (if needed)
Before bed	2 nd Iron (if needed)

What happens if I don't take them?

Malnutrition is a serious complication of bariatric surgery. Without adequate vitamin and mineral supplements, you can experience:

- Anaemia (low blood cells)
- Poor bone health and osteoporosis
- Ulcers
- Fatigue
- Poor immune system
- Poor wound healing
- Muscle weakness
- Vision disturbances
- Infertility
- Neurological (nerve) issues

Contacting us

If you have any questions, please contact the Bariatric Dietitians.

Tel: 0118 322 7116 or email rbb-tr.dietitians@nhs.net

Useful websites

Weight Loss Surgery Information: www.nhs.uk/conditions/weight-loss-surgery/

NHS Better Health: www.nhs.uk/better-health/

Useful books

Living with Bariatric Surgery: Managing your mind and your weight.

Author: Denise Ratcliffe. Published 2018.

To find out more about our Trust visit www.royalberkshire.nhs.uk

Please ask if you need this information in another language or format.

Reviewed by RBFT Bariatric Dietitians (Centre for Diabetes & Endocrinology, April 2025).

Next review due: April 2027.