

# Smart Food Choices for Bariatric Patients

Before bariatric surgery, as you focus on changing lifestyle behaviors, use this chart as a guide to help you make smart food choices.


- **GO** foods – Eat these **daily**.
- **SLOW** foods – Eat these **weekly** or less often.
- **WHOA** foods – Eat these **monthly** or on special occasions.


After bariatric surgery, when you are able to eat semi-solid and solid foods (Step 4 diet), **remember these guidelines as you make food choices:**

- Eat at least 6 small meals each day that include a protein source, such as meat, poultry, fish, eggs, beans, or nuts.
- Portions should be around ¼ to ½ cup and take about 20 to 25 minutes to eat.
- Limit sugar and sugar alcohols to less than 10 grams each per meal.

Food group	Go foods	SLOW foods	WHOA foods
	<b>Nutrient Dense</b>		<b>Calorie Dense</b>
<b>Fruits</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All fresh and frozen fruits</li> <li>• Canned fruits packed in natural juices</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Canned fruits packed in light syrup</li> <li>• Diet fruit juice</li> <li>• Dried fruits</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Canned fruits packed in heavy syrup</li> <li>• Fruit juice with more than 10 grams of sugar per serving</li> </ul>
<b>Vegetables</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All fresh, frozen, and canned vegetables with <u>no</u> added salt, fat, or sauce</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All vegetables <u>with</u> added salt, fat, or sauce</li> <li>• Oven baked French fries</li> <li>• Vegetable juice (choose low sodium)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Any deep fried vegetable, such as French fries, hash browns, and fried pickles</li> </ul>



Food group	Go foods	SLOW foods	WHOA foods
			
	<b>Nutrient Dense</b>		<b>Calorie Dense</b>
<b>Protein</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Trimmed beef and pork</li> <li>Extra lean beef (greater than 95% lean)</li> <li>Chicken or turkey with <u>no</u> skin</li> <li>Tuna canned in water</li> <li>Fish or shellfish that is baked, boiled, or steamed</li> <li>Egg whites or whole eggs cooked with no added fat</li> <li>Beans, peas, lentils, hummus, tofu, or textured vegetable protein cooked with no added fat</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Lean ground beef (less than 90% lean)</li> <li>Ham or Canadian bacon</li> <li>Chicken or turkey <u>with</u> skin</li> <li>Low fat hot dog or lunch meat</li> <li>Tuna canned in oil</li> <li>Peanut butter</li> <li>Nuts or seeds</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Untrimmed beef and pork</li> <li>Regular ground beef (less than 85% lean)</li> <li>Ribs</li> <li>Bacon</li> <li>Fried chicken or chicken nuggets</li> <li>Hot dogs, lunch meat, pepperoni, salami, or sausage</li> <li>Fried fish or shellfish</li> </ul>
<b>Grains, Breads, Cereals</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Whole grain breads, pita breads, and tortillas</li> <li>Whole grain pasta</li> <li>Brown rice</li> <li>Unsweetened whole grain breakfast cereals</li> <li>Any other whole grains, such as quinoa, farro, bulgar, etc.</li> <li>Whole wheat crackers</li> <li>Cooked cereals, such as sugar free oatmeal, grits, etc.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Refined white breads, pastas, or rice</li> <li>Croutons</li> <li>Low sodium soups</li> <li>French toast, waffles, or pancakes</li> <li>Corn bread or biscuits</li> <li>Granola</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Baked goods, such muffins, doughnuts, croissants, or sweet rolls</li> <li>Crackers made with added fat or trans fats</li> <li>Sweetened breakfast cereals</li> </ul>
<b>Milk and Dairy Products</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Fat free (skim) or 1% milk</li> <li>Lactaid or soy milk</li> <li>Nonfat dry milk powder</li> <li>Fat free or low fat yogurt</li> <li>Reduced fat or fat free cheeses</li> <li>Fat free or low fat cottage cheese (0 to 2% milkfat)</li> <li>Unsweetened almond milk</li> <li>Commercial high protein drink</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>2% milk</li> <li>Full fat cheese</li> <li>Fat free or reduced fat sour cream</li> <li>Fat free or reduced fat cream cheese</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Whole milk</li> <li>Processed cheese spread</li> <li>Full fat sour cream</li> <li>Full fat cream cheese</li> <li>Whole milk yogurt or yogurt with more than 10 grams of sugar</li> <li>Whole milk cottage cheese (4% milkfat)</li> </ul>

Food group	Go foods	SLOW foods	WHOA foods
	Nutrient Dense		Calorie Dense
<b>Sweets and Snacks</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Sugar free popsicles</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Frozen fruit bars</li> <li>Fat free or low fat frozen yogurt or ice cream</li> <li>Sugar free desserts, such as cookies, cake, or candy</li> <li>Baked chips, pretzels, low fat microwave popcorn, or graham crackers</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Baked goods, such as cakes, cookies, or pies</li> <li>Chocolate and candy</li> <li>Ice cream</li> <li>Pretzels or chips</li> <li>Buttered or flavored popcorn</li> </ul>
<b>Fats and Condiments</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Fat free mayonnaise</li> <li>Avocado</li> <li>Vegetable oil or olive oil (in moderation)</li> <li>Fat free gravy</li> <li>Fat free creamy salad dressings</li> <li>Vinegarette dressings</li> <li>Unsalted nuts or seeds (watch serving size)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Low fat mayonnaise</li> <li>Soft margarine</li> <li>Low fat gravy</li> <li>Low fat creamy salad dressings</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Full fat mayonnaise</li> <li>Butter, stick margarine, or lard</li> <li>Coconut oil</li> <li>Full fat gravy</li> <li>Regular creamy salad dressings</li> </ul>
<b>Beverages</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Water</li> <li>Sugar free sports drinks</li> <li>Decaf coffee and tea</li> <li>Caffeine free, non-carbonated, calorie free beverages, such as Crystal Light</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Coffee or tea (2 to 6 months after surgery)</li> <li>Sugar free fruit juices or vegetable juices</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>After surgery avoid:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Carbonated beverages and sodas</li> <li>Fruit juices with more than 10 grams of sugar</li> <li>Regular sports drinks</li> </ul> </li> <li><b>After surgery, limit alcohol</b></li> </ul>

**This handout is for informational purposes only. Talk with your doctor or health care team if you have any questions about your care.**

For more health information, go to [wexnermedical.osu.edu/patiented](http://wexnermedical.osu.edu/patiented) or contact the Library for Health Information at 614-293-3707 or [health-info@osu.edu](mailto:health-info@osu.edu).