

# Physical Health Tips to Prepare for Total Gastrectomy?

PATIENT RESOURCES  
**HDGC**



## Physical Fitness

It is important that you are physically prepared for your surgery to help minimize the risk of complications after surgery and throughout your healing process.



### Physical fitness for surgery includes good heart and lung function.

Any medical conditions, including heart and lung problems, may pose a risk for complications after surgery and should be addressed with your health care team.

If you smoke, you need to quit smoking, especially since smoking is a significant risk factor for many kinds of cancer, including gastric cancer.

For at least one month before surgery, get 30 minutes of exercise every day, such as brisk walking, gardening, exercising at home or going to the gym, to promote good cardiovascular health.

## Weight

Even though you will lose weight after your total gastrectomy, most people should not gain weight before surgery. Being overweight or obese increases the risk of complications after surgery.

Talk to your dietitian and health care team about your weight goals before surgery and how to achieve those goals.

## Diet and Nutrition Tips to Prepare for Total Gastrectomy

- 1 Review "Diet and Nutrition After Gastrectomy: What You Should Know."** That packet describes the dietary and lifestyle changes you will have to make after surgery.
- 2 Practice eating slowly and concentrate on chewing your food well.** Chew your food until it is pureed before you swallow.
- 3 Eat smaller meals more often.** Start eating 5 or 6 small meals per day instead of 3 larger meals. You may need to adjust your home, work and/or school schedule to allow frequent meals.
- 4 Practice eating meals without drinking liquids.** Drink fluids 30 minutes before or 30 minutes after your meal.
- 5 Start reading nutrition labels for added sugars.** After gastrectomy, you will need to avoid added sugars to prevent side effects such as dumping syndrome (described in "Diet and Nutrition After Gastrectomy: What You Should Know"). Find products that do not have added sugar to replace any products you eat now that do have added sugar.

- 6 Learn which foods are high in protein.** Since you will feel full quickly, it is very important to have protein at every meal and snack so that you can meet your protein needs. Start having a high protein food with every meal and snack, such as a no sugar added protein drink, bar or yogurt.



- 7 Take good care of your teeth.** Since you will need to chew your food extra carefully after total gastrectomy, good oral hygiene is key. See your dentist for regular cleanings and make sure to address any known dental concerns *before* your surgery.
- 8 Talk to your dietitian about vitamin supplements before your surgery.** Tell your dietitian about any supplements you are currently taking. Depending on your supplements, lab results, past medical history and/or other factors, you may need to take specific vitamins before surgery to correct low vitamin levels.