

## Pre-Op Very Low Energy Diet (VLED)

### Diet before bariatric surgery

This resource is for patients undergoing bariatric surgery. This sheet explains the **pre-op stage** before your surgery.

---

#### What is the pre-op stage (Before surgery)?

- You will begin the pre-op stage **2-4 weeks** before surgery.
  - This involves following a Very Low Energy Diet (VLED) called Optifast®. Your surgeon or dietitian will tell you when to begin this stage.
  - Strictly follow these instructions for your diet. If you do not follow the pre-op stage, the size of your liver may not reduce, and your surgery may be cancelled.
- 

#### What is Optifast®?

- Optifast® is a total meal replacement program.
  - It is a very low energy diet providing approximately 2400kJ (600kcal) a day. Optifast® provides **all the vitamins and minerals your body needs**.
  - So, a multivitamin is not needed before surgery - unless you have a diagnosed pre-existing nutrition deficiency.
- 

#### How does Optifast® work?

- Optifast® helps you to **lose weight** while maintaining lean body mass.
- It is a low carbohydrate diet, which will cause your body to go into mild ketosis.
- During ketosis, the body switches from using carbohydrates as the main energy source, to using fats.
- This means it is **important to follow the plan**. Do not include any extra carbohydrates (or sugars) which can stop this process.

## Why do I have to go on Optifast®?

Optifast® before your surgery, assists to:

- **Reduce the size of your liver.** This will allow the surgeon better access to your stomach.
  - Improve your **nutrition** before surgery.
  - Prepare you to make **changes to your eating habits** before surgery.
  - **Lose weight**, which may help reduce risk of complications after surgery.
- 

## How much Optifast® should I have?

- You need to have **three (3)** Optifast® products each day.
  - These can include any combination of the shakes, soups, bars or desserts.
  - Mix sachets with at least 200ml water (add more water if desired).
  - If you need a different product other than Optifast® it must be a “**VLED**”. Please discuss with your dietitian.
- 

## 3-day challenge

During the first 3 days of this diet, you may experience the following symptoms:

- Fatigue
- Hunger
- Nausea
- Lack of concentration
- Headaches

These symptoms usually improve by day 4-6.

## Fibre

- This diet can change your bowel habits. You might experience diarrhoea or constipation.
  - If you experience constipation, ensure you are eating **2 cups of vegetables and 2 litres of water each day**.
  - If needed, add extra fibre supplements (such as Benefibre) to your diet.
- 

## What other foods and fluids can I have?

Every day you can have **three (3)** Optifast® products, plus:

- + at least 2 cups of vegetables from allowed list on page 2
- + 1 teaspoon oil
- + 2L water
- + extra protein if recommended by your Dietitian.

Please note: If you have certain pre-existing medical conditions your doctor may change the amount of fluid you need.

---

## Protein Serve

If your Dietitian has recommended extra protein, please **choose one option, once per day**:

- 100g [raw weight] meat/chicken/fish (unprocessed with no crumbs or batter)
- 2 eggs
- 100g tin of tuna or salmon in springwater

Please choose from the allowed column:

Food Group	Foods Allowed	Foods NOT Allowed
Grains	Nil	Do not have any grains
Fruit	Nil	Do not have any fruits or avocado
Vegetables <i>Aim for at least 2 cups/day</i>	Alfalfa sprouts, asparagus, bean sprouts, bok choy, broccoli, brussel sprouts, cabbage, capsicum, carrot, cauliflower, celery, choko, cress, cucumber, dill pickles, eggplant, endive, fennel, green beans, kale, leek, lettuce, mushrooms, onion, radish, shallots, silverbeet, snow peas, spinach, squash, tomato, watercress, zucchini	<b>Only eat vegetables on the allowed list</b>
Meat and meat alternatives	Only include if allowed in your plan	
Dairy	Only 30ml skim milk 1/day in tea/coffee	Do not have any other dairy
Soups	Stock cubes, Miso Soup, Bonox Soup made from allowed vegetable list	<b>Only eat soups on the allowed list</b>
Sauces/Condiments	Fat free or light salad dressings, lemon juice, lime juice, mustard, soy sauce, Tabasco, vinegar	<b>Only have sauces/condiments from allowed list</b>
Herbs and Spices	All herbs and spices, garlic, ginger, salt and pepper	
Other	Artificial Sweeteners, diet jelly	Do not have: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Honey</li> <li>• Sugar</li> <li>• Syrups</li> </ul>
Fluids <i>Aim for 2 litres of fluids/day</i>	Water ( <i>this is the preferred fluid</i> ), plain mineral water or soda water, diet cordial, tea or coffee (with less than 30ml skim milk & no sugar. Artificial sweeteners such as "Stevia" are allowed), hHerbal teas	Do not have: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Alcohol</li> <li>• Cordial</li> <li>• Juice</li> <li>• Soft drink</li> <li>• Milk</li> </ul>

## **Take home messages**

- 2-4 weeks before your surgery you will begin a very low energy diet
- This will reduce the size of your liver to help the surgeon get access to your stomach during surgery
- Every day have:
  - 3 Optifast products
  - 2 cups of vegetables from allowed list
  - 1 teaspoon of oil
  - 2L of water

### **Sample Meal Plans:**

*These are sample meal plans to show you what your diet may look like in the pre-op stage.*

#### **Sample Meal Plan 1:**

<b>Breakfast</b>	<b>Morning Tea</b>	<b>Lunch</b>	<b>Afternoon Tea</b>	<b>Dinner</b>	<b>Supper</b>
7am:	10am:	1pm:	3pm:	6pm:	8pm:
Optifast Shake	1 cup herbal tea + Water	Optifast Soup + 1 cup salad with diet dressing + Water	Miso soup with ginger, garlic, soy sauce, 1 tsp oil + Water	Optifast Shake + 1 cup stir-fried vegetables	Diet jelly (1 cup)

## Sample meal plan 2

Breakfast	Morning Tea	Lunch	Afternoon Tea	Dinner	Supper
7am:	10am:	1pm:	3pm:	6pm:	8pm:
Optifast Bar	1 cup tea w/ 30ml skim milk  + Water	Optifast Shake  + 1 cup salad with diet dressing  + Water	Vegetable stock soup + 1 cup cooked vegetables (ex: onion, carrot, celery, crushed tomatoes), 1 tsp oil  + Water	Optifast Dessert	Diet jelly (1 cup)

## My Optifast® plan

Start Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Duration: \_\_\_\_\_

Weight first day of VLCD: \_\_\_\_\_ kg

Additional Protein: \_\_\_\_\_ g

Notes: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

## Support

Sign up to the Optifast® Website for free access to the community forum, support tools, meal planner, recipe inspiration, weight loss progress and meal tracking.

[www.optifast.com.au](http://www.optifast.com.au)

For further information contact your Dietitian or Nutritionist: \_\_\_\_\_