delaCruzMunoz

**Bariatric Surgery Discharge Instructions and Warning Signs**

## GOING HOME AFTER BARIATRIC SURGERY

Your Recovery Instructions and When to Call Us

### CALL US IMMEDIATELY, DAY OR NIGHT

**24-hour number: 786-635-0400**

Do not wait until morning. Do not wait for your next appointment. Call if any of these happen:

**Your heart is racing.** A resting heart rate over 100 beats per minute, or a pulse that keeps climbing, is the single most important warning sign after bariatric surgery. It can be the first and sometimes the only sign of a serious problem, and it often appears before you feel truly ill. Check your pulse twice a day for the first two weeks and write it down.

**Fever.** A temperature of 101 degrees Fahrenheit or higher, or chills.

**Trouble breathing.** Shortness of breath, chest pain, or breathing that feels harder than it did yesterday.

**Severe or worsening belly pain.** Some soreness is expected and should improve a little each day. Pain that is severe, or pain that is getting worse instead of better, is not normal.

**Vomiting that will not stop.** Especially if you cannot keep fluids down for more than 8 to 12 hours.

**You cannot drink.** If you are unable to keep sipping fluids, you will become dehydrated quickly. This is the most common reason bariatric patients end up back in the hospital.

**Signs of a blood clot.** Pain, swelling, redness, or warmth in one calf or leg.

© 2026 Nestor de la Cruz-Muñoz, MD. All rights reserved. No reproduction or distribution without written permission. https:www.delacruzmunoz.com

**Wound problems.** Increasing redness, swelling, warmth, drainage of pus, foul odor, or an incision that opens up.

**Bleeding.** Vomiting blood or material that looks like coffee grounds, or black tarry stools.

**Dizziness or fainting**, or feeling like you might pass out when you stand.

**Little or no urine**, urine that is very dark, or no urination for more than 8 hours.

**When in doubt, call.** We would far rather hear from you about something minor than have you wait at home with something serious. No one at this office will ever make you feel foolish for calling.

**Call 911 or go to the nearest emergency room** for chest pain, severe shortness of breath, fainting, or heavy bleeding. Tell them you had bariatric surgery and give them the date and procedure listed at the top of this page.

---

**HOW TO CHECK YOUR PULSE**

Place two fingers on the thumb side of your opposite wrist. Count the beats for 30 seconds and multiply by two. Do this sitting quietly, not right after walking.

Write it down twice a day for two weeks. Bring the log to your first appointment.

A rate over 100 at rest, or a steady upward trend over a day or two, means call us.

| Day | Morning | Evening | Temperature |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | | | |
| 2 | | | |
| 3 | | | |
| 4 | | | |
| 5 | | | |

© 2026 Nestor de la Cruz-Muñoz, MD. All rights reserved. No reproduction or distribution without written permission. https:www.delacruzmunoz.com

6

7

---

**DRINKING AND EATING**

**Fluids come first.** Your goal is at least 64 ounces of fluid every day. That is eight 8-ounce cups. Sip constantly throughout the day.

Small sips only. No gulping. No straws. No carbonated drinks. Keep a water bottle within arm's reach at all times and set a timer if you need to.

Dehydration is the number one reason patients come back to the hospital in the first month. It is also the easiest problem to prevent.

**Follow your diet stages exactly as written in your nutrition guide.** Do not skip ahead, even if you feel fine.

- Clear liquids: days 1 through 3

- Full liquids: days 4 through 7

- Pureed foods: starting day 8

- Soft foods: around week 3

- Regular solids: weeks 4 to 6

**Protein every day.** At least 60 grams daily, starting when you move to full liquids. Protein protects your muscle while your body burns fat.

**Never drink with meals.** Stop fluids 30 minutes before you eat and wait 30 minutes after.

© 2026 Nestor de la Cruz-Muñoz, MD. All rights reserved. No reproduction or distribution without written permission. https:www.delacruzmunoz.com

**Once you are eating food:** protein first, 20 to 30 chews per bite, 20 to 30 minutes per meal. Put the fork down between bites.

---

**YOUR VITAMINS**

Start your bariatric vitamins as directed by your team, usually within the first days to weeks after surgery.

You will take vitamins every day for the rest of your life. This is not optional and it does not end. Missing them long term can cause serious and sometimes permanent problems with your blood, bones, and nerves.

Chewable or liquid forms are used at first because pills are hard to absorb early on.

Your full vitamin schedule is in your separate vitamin guide.

---

**MOVING AND ACTIVITY**

**Walk starting today.** Short walks, several times a day, beginning the day you go home. Walking prevents blood clots and pneumonia and helps your bowels wake up.

Build up gradually. A few minutes at a time is enough at first.

**Breathing exercises.** Use your incentive spirometer 10 times every hour while awake for the first week. Take deep breaths and cough, holding a pillow against your belly if it is sore.

**Do not lift more than [10 to 20] pounds** for [4 to 6] weeks, or as your surgeon directs.

**No driving** while you are taking narcotic pain medication, or until you can move comfortably and react quickly.

© 2026 Nestor de la Cruz-Muñoz, MD. All rights reserved. No reproduction or distribution without written permission. https:www.delacruzmunoz.com

**Returning to work:** usually 1 to 3 weeks for desk work, longer for physical labor. Ask your surgeon.

**Showering:** you may shower [24 to 48] hours after surgery unless told otherwise. Pat incisions dry. No baths, pools, or hot tubs until cleared.

**Exercise:** ask your surgeon before starting structured exercise. Most patients begin around 4 to 6 weeks.

---

**YOUR MEDICATIONS**

**No NSAIDs.** This means ibuprofen, Advil, Motrin, naproxen, Aleve, aspirin, Goody's powders, and BC powders. These can cause ulcers in your new anatomy. After gastric bypass this restriction is permanent. Always check with us before starting any new medication.

**No smoking, vaping, or nicotine in any form.** Nicotine dramatically increases the risk of ulcers and poor healing.

**No alcohol** for at least the first 6 months, and be cautious afterward. Alcohol hits harder and faster after bariatric surgery.

**Pills:** crush or take liquid forms of large pills for the first few weeks. Never crush extended-release or enteric-coated medications without asking first.

**Diabetes and blood pressure medications** often need to be reduced quickly after surgery. Check your blood sugar and blood pressure as instructed and call us with the numbers.

**Blood thinners:** if you were sent home on an injectable blood thinner, complete the full course as prescribed.

Bring all medication bottles to your first appointment.

© 2026 Nestor de la Cruz-Muñoz, MD. All rights reserved. No reproduction or distribution without written permission. https:www.delacruzmunoz.com

---

**YOUR INCISIONS**

Some bruising and mild swelling around the incisions is normal.

Keep them clean and dry. Follow your surgeon's specific instructions for dressings.

Glue or steri-strips will peel off on their own. Do not pull them off.

A small amount of clear or slightly pink drainage in the first days can be normal. Pus, foul odor, increasing redness, or spreading warmth is not.

---

**WHAT IS NORMAL IN THE FIRST WEEKS**

These are expected and do not require an emergency call:

- Feeling tired. Your calorie intake is very low right now.

- Mild nausea that improves with slower sipping

- Some shoulder pain from gas used during surgery, which resolves with walking

- Constipation. Ask us about a stool softener.

- Bruising around the incisions

- Not feeling hungry at all

- Mood changes and moments of doubt. This is common and it passes.

- Food tasting different than it used to

If something feels wrong to you, call anyway. Trust your instincts.

© 2026 Nestor de la Cruz-Muñoz, MD. All rights reserved. No reproduction or distribution without written permission. https:www.delacruzmunoz.com

---

**YOUR APPOINTMENTS**

First visit: _____ (usually 1 to 2 weeks after surgery)

Nutrition visit: _____

Then: 3 months, 6 months, 12 months, and at least once a year for life.

Lab work is drawn at these visits to check your vitamin and mineral levels.

**Do not stop coming.** Losing contact with your surgical team is the strongest predictor of problems years down the road. Even when everything is going well, keep your annual visit.

Support group meets: _____

---

**BEFORE YOU LEAVE THE HOSPITAL, MAKE SURE YOU HAVE**

- This instruction sheet and your nutrition guide

- Your prescriptions filled or sent to your pharmacy

- Your first follow-up appointment scheduled

- Protein drinks and clear liquids waiting at home

- A thermometer

- A ride home and someone with you for the first 24 to 48 hours

- The 24-hour phone number saved in your phone

---

© 2026 Nestor de la Cruz-Muñoz, MD. All rights reserved. No reproduction or distribution without written permission. https:www.delacruzmunoz.com

delaCruzMunoz

**Real science. Real surgery. Real results.**

[PRACTICE NAME] | [ADDRESS] | [PHONE] | [WEBSITE]

Reviewed and approved by the Metabolic and Bariatric Surgery Committee. Version 1, [DATE]. Next scheduled review: [DATE + 1 year].

---

---

**TEAR HERE AND KEEP ON YOUR REFRIGERATOR**

---

**BARIATRIC SURGERY EMERGENCY CARD**

**CALL 24 HOURS A DAY: [PHONE]**

Surgery date: _____ Procedure: _____

**CALL RIGHT AWAY IF:**

- **Heart rate over 100 at rest** (most important sign)

- Fever of 101 F or higher

- Trouble breathing or chest pain

- Severe or worsening belly pain

- Vomiting that will not stop

- Cannot keep fluids down for 8 to 12 hours

- Pain or swelling in one leg

© 2026 Nestor de la Cruz-Muñoz, MD. All rights reserved. No reproduction or distribution without written permission. https:www.delacruzmunoz.com

- Redness, pus, or drainage from an incision

- Vomiting blood, or black tarry stools

- Dizziness, fainting, or very little urine

**EVERY DAY:**

- 64 ounces of fluid, sipped all day

- 60 grams of protein

- Vitamins

- Walk

- No straws, no carbonation, no NSAIDs, no smoking

**If you go to an emergency room, show them this card.**

I had bariatric surgery on the date above. Please contact my surgical team.

© 2026 Nestor de la Cruz-Muñoz, MD. All rights reserved. No reproduction or distribution without written permission. https:www.delacruzmunoz.com