



## **Lab Work--Gastric Bypass / Gastric Sleeve Taking Charge of Your Health**

It is typical to experience huge improvements in health and well-being almost immediately after surgery. Most experience a decrease in the number and amount of medications required, a surge in energy, and a decrease in related health symptoms. Weight loss is brisk and enthusiasm high. While you are feeling great and things are going well, it is easy to take your good health for granted. As your body is experiencing many changes, it is important to keep regular appointments with your family doctor to monitor health issues and adjustments to medications. It is also important to maintain regularly scheduled visits with your bariatric surgeon and nutritionist.

Keeping a close eye on your health during the rapid weight loss phase is wise. One way you can do this is with lab work. Your surgeon will order lab work at 3 months, 6 months, 9 months, and 12 months after surgery and then annually thereafter. This lab work will give the surgeon information about potential nutrient deficiencies, electrolyte balance, and the functioning of body systems. Each set of lab work will be compared to previous tests, to monitor trends. The lab work results should be sent to your bariatric surgeon and to your family physician.

Your surgeon's office will notify you that they have received your lab work. They will do this with a letter that states that your lab results are within acceptable ranges or that you need to take some further steps. Additional vitamins and supplements, a phone consult with the nutritionist or a follow-up visit with your surgeon or family physician may be recommended.

During your six-week follow-up visit, you will receive the order for the first four labs. Take this order to your family physician or a laboratory that is covered by your medical insurance. Have the first test completed 1-2 weeks prior to your scheduled three-month appointment to enable the lab to forward the results to the office. The surgeon will review the results with you at that time. You will probably not meet with the surgeon again until 12 months after your surgery. Having the lab work completed and forwarded will allow the surgeon to follow your progress. The one order form is all that you will need to have all four labs completed.

You will need to fast for eight hours prior to each lab test. This means nothing to eat or drink except water for at least eight hours prior to the test. You may take regularly scheduled medications with water.

Having your lab work completed as ordered is one step that you can take to insure a healthy weight loss. Follow all recommendations by the health professionals at your surgeon's office and call with any questions or concerns. Be invested in your own good health.