

Weight Loss Plateaus

Weight loss plateaus are a frustrating fact in every weight loss experience. It may feel like you have hit a big wall when you stop seeing results from your efforts. You are trying to do everything right--eating six small meals, getting in all of the recommended protein and fluid, avoiding added sugars and limiting fats, and keeping up a regular exercise program. Still, the scale does not move--how discouraging! Let's take a look at what is going on and how to move beyond the plateau to reach your weight loss goals.

First of all, let's review the habits and choices that will help you with long-term weight loss success. Bariatric surgery is a wonderful tool that can help you to achieve your weight loss goals and greatly improve your health and quality of life. Just like any other tool, you need to use it properly to have the greatest success.

- One of the most important choices that you can make is to insure that your body gets the nutrients that it needs to be healthy. This includes adequate fluid, protein, vitamin/mineral supplementation, and six small meals daily. Dehydration, malnutrition, muscle wasting, decreased energy, hair loss and lowered metabolism are the long-term results when you decide that it is not important to provide your body with adequate nutrition. Make the choice today to feed your body what it needs.
- High fat foods and foods that contain more than minimal amounts of added sugar provide your body with many empty calories. Once you make the decision to avoid these foods, it is easy to find healthful and delicious alternatives.
- Regular exercise is one of the most important aspects of a healthy lifestyle. It is essential for weight loss and the maintenance of a lower body weight.

Hitting a Plateau

Plateaus are a normal part of weight loss. Plateaus of 1-2 weeks may just be an adjustment in your body's fluid balance. This often happens as you begin or increase an exercise program. Taking measurements or watching your clothing becoming loose is much more rewarding than watching the scale during this time. Be sure that you are not weighing yourself more than once a week; daily fluctuations in your weight can hinder motivation in the most determined individual.

If a plateau lasts for 3 weeks or longer, it is time to evaluate your nutrition and exercise program. As you lose weight, your body requires less energy to function. You may find that your energy (calorie) intake is equal to your energy output, even though you would still like to lose more weight. Here are some steps to evaluate your lifestyle habits.

- Keep a food diary. Even a few days' worth of recording can shed light on habits that you may not be aware of. Larger portions, more restaurant meals, high calorie coffee beverages or grazing can add unnoticed calories. Write down

everything that goes in your mouth. Get out the calorie counter or read the Nutrition Facts labels and add up your calorie intake for the day. [You may as well check out your protein intake while you are at it!] The Barix Nutrition Program does not focus on calories, but your Barix nutritionist can let you know if your calorie intake is putting you on track to success.

- Honestly evaluate your exercise routine. How many days each week are you engaging in regular exercise? Does your exercise routine challenge you physically? Have other things gotten in the way of the time you need to exercise? Make plans to get back into a regular exercise routine if you have slacked off. Regular exercise is essential for reaching and maintaining a healthy weight.

Moving Beyond the Plateau

- Keep a food and exercise diary to track your success.
- It is difficult to eye-ball portions. Measure food to insure that you are not really getting 1-1/4 cup instead of 3/4cup.
- Don't skip meals or cut calories down to less than 1200 calories a day. This can result in lowering your metabolism further.
- Don't rush your meals--enjoy them.
- Make a list of the reasons that you want to lose weight and improve your health. Hang it up somewhere that you will see often. Let those reasons motivate you to make healthful lifestyle choices.
- Shake up your exercise routine. Your amazing body adapts to just about any routine. Vary your exercise program, put forth more effort or add some new elements that will use your muscles a little differently and your body will respond. Strength training in addition to aerobic exercise is very effective because muscle is added to offset the metabolism-lowering effect of weight loss.
- Consider purchasing a pedometer and working toward a 10,000 steps per day (or more) goal.
- Cut back on sedentary activities such as TV, computer use, or reading and find more activities that you enjoy.

Long Term Success

Plateaus are an inevitable part of weight loss. Expect them. Plan to deal with them. Sometimes they are just your body's way of adapting, but sometimes they signal that your current nutrition and exercise program needs to be tweaked. Plateaus can help you to keep on track and move beyond for long term success. Healthful lifestyle habits are a requirement, not an option. The gastric exclusion surgery provides the tool. It's up to you to make healthful lifestyle choices that will enable you to reach and maintain a healthy weight.