

## CHAPTER TWO

# VSG Meal Plans

*Planning meals ahead is a great way to successfully jump-start your post-op diet. After surgery, you may feel overwhelmed with the rapid changes your body is going through and planning meals will be “just one more thing” you have to worry about. But when you know what you are going to eat ahead of time, it makes grocery shopping a breeze and takes away the stress of having nothing to eat when you come home late after work.*

Before surgery, many people find they don't plan meals, because they don't have time or it might not be a priority. After surgery, many people forgo planning meals because they aren't interested in food and may not feel hunger. It's important to have a daily plan to get adequate fluids, vitamin supplements, and protein so that you don't miss a meal and end up playing catch-up later. Aim for spreading meals about four to six hours apart, and fit in a glass of High-Protein Milk (page 44) or a protein shake as a snack in between.

A simple tip for meal planning is to cook once and eat the meal at least twice. The majority of recipes in this book contain several servings—enough to feed your entire family and still have leftovers for lunch the next day—and that's intentional. Some recipes can be easily frozen in small servings to eat at a later date. Note that at least one dinner meal per week includes leftovers from a previous meal. Make sure to pull what you need from the freezer a day ahead of time, if necessary. If you find that your household needs fewer servings than the amount the recipes prepare, feel free to save the leftovers and swap them in as another dinner meal during the week to save on food waste and meal prep time.

I hope you will use the following eight weeks of meal plans as a guide to make menu planning easier after surgery. Feel free to swap in your own meal selections depending on your personal preferences and what your schedule allows. Always follow the post-op guidelines as recommended by your surgery center. I strongly urge you to keep track of your grams of daily protein intake. These meal plans are meant to serve as a guide, and since the actual portions you consume may vary, you still need to be mindful of making sure you meet your protein intake. Happy cooking!

## WEEK 1 AND WEEK 2

# LIQUID DIET FL

Weeks one and two are all about liquids, liquids, liquids. Staying hydrated is the number one priority in the first two weeks after surgery. Here are some other important factors to keep in mind.

- ▶ When it comes to hydration, focus on getting water in *first* and protein-rich liquids second. Aim for a minimum of 64 ounces of fluid per day from water, other clear liquids, and protein-rich shakes.
- ▶ Make sure all shakes and smoothies are without seeds or pulp from fruit.
- ▶ If you are drinking your entire protein shake at mealtimes, you may consider adding High-Protein Milk (page 44) between meals to help increase your protein intake for the day.
- ▶ Note that each recipe for the protein shakes makes two servings, so refrigerate the second serving for the next day.

## WEEK 1 FL

	BREAKFAST	A.M. SNACK	LUNCH	P.M. SNACK	DINNER
DAY 1	Commercial protein shake with at least 20g protein	Water/clear broth/calorie-free beverages	Protein-Packed Peanut Butter Cup Shake (page 48)	Water/clear broth/calorie-free beverages	Double Fudge Chocolate Shake (page 46)
DAY 2	Protein-Packed Peanut Butter Cup Shake (page 48)		Commercial protein shake with at least 20g protein		Double Fudge Chocolate Shake (page 46)
DAY 3	Double Fudge Chocolate Shake (page 46)		Very Vanilla Bean Probiotic Shake (page 47)		Commercial protein shake with at least 20g protein
DAY 4	Commercial protein shake with at least 20g protein		Double Fudge Chocolate Shake (page 46)		Very Vanilla Bean Probiotic Shake (page 47)
DAY 5	Very Vanilla Bean Probiotic Shake (page 47)		Commercial protein shake with at least 20g protein		Protein-Packed Peanut Butter Cup Shake (page 48)
DAY 6	Protein-Packed Peanut Butter Cup Shake (page 48)		Double Fudge Chocolate Shake (page 46)		Commercial protein shake with at least 20g protein
DAY 7	Commercial protein shake with at least 20g protein		Very Vanilla Bean Probiotic Shake (page 47)		Double Fudge Chocolate Shake (page 46)

**WEEK 2** FL

	<b>BREAKFAST</b>	<b>A.M. SNACK</b>	<b>LUNCH</b>	<b>P.M. SNACK</b>	<b>DINNER</b>
<b>DAY 1</b>	Double Fudge Chocolate Shake (page 46)	Clear liquids/water/clear broth/High-Protein Milk (page 44) (optional)	Chunky Monkey Smoothie (page 53)	Clear liquids/water/clear broth/High-Protein Milk (page 44) (optional)	Commercial protein shake with at least 20g protein
<b>DAY 2</b>	Strawberry-Banana Protein Smoothie (page 54)		Chunky Monkey Smoothie (page 53)		Vanilla Apple Pie Protein Shake (page 49)
<b>DAY 3</b>	Vanilla Apple Pie Protein Shake (page 49)		Commercial protein shake with at least 20g protein		Strawberry-Banana Protein Smoothie (page 54)
<b>DAY 4</b>	Commercial protein shake with at least 20g protein		Berry Blast Protein Shake (page 51)		Double Fudge Chocolate Shake (page 46)
<b>DAY 5</b>	Double Fudge Chocolate Shake (page 46)		Berry Blast Protein Shake (page 51)		Commercial protein shake with at least 20g protein
<b>DAY 6</b>	Pumpkin Spice Latte Protein Shake (page 45)		Tropical Mango Smoothie (page 50)		Very Vanilla Bean Probiotic Shake (page 47)
<b>DAY 7</b>	Pumpkin Spice Latte Protein Shake (page 45)		Very Vanilla Bean Probiotic Shake (page 47)		Tropical Mango Smoothie (page 50)

## WEEK 3

# PUREED DIET P

Pureed foods are slightly thicker in consistency than the liquids you have been consuming to this point and allow you more variety in your diet. Almost anything can be pureed if you have a decent blender or food processor.

- ▶ During the pureed diet, continue to focus on drinking fluids *first*, getting adequate protein *second*, and supplementing with fruits and vegetables *last*.
- ▶ Aim for about  $\frac{1}{4}$  to  $\frac{1}{2}$  cup of food at each meal. The total volume of food you eat will decrease now that you're switching to more solid foods, since your sleeve will become full more quickly.
- ▶ Drink High-Protein Milk (page 44) or a protein shake between meals to meet your protein goal.
- ▶ Use herbs and seasonings to flavor your food—try curry powder, taco seasoning, chili powder, or other seasoning blends (ideally low-sodium) to make pureed foods more interesting.
- ▶ Use milk, Greek yogurt, water, or broth to thin foods for pureeing to your desired consistency.
- ▶ Take caution with pureeing foods in catsup, BBQ sauce, or premade sauces, as they can add calories and sugars—check labels carefully.

## WEEK 3 P

	BREAKFAST	A.M. SNACK	LUNCH	P.M. SNACK	DINNER
DAY 1	Best Scrambled Eggs (page 55)	High-Protein Milk (page 44) or protein shake	Classic Tuna Salad (page 56)	High-Protein Milk (page 44) or protein shak	Noodle-less Lasagna with Ricotta Cheese (page 59)
DAY 2	Hearty Slow Cooker Cinnamon Oatmeal (page 63)		Refried Black Beans (page 58) Cottage cheese mixed with taco seasoning		Slow Cooker Barbecue Shredded Chicken (page 135) Mashed Cauliflower (page 76)
DAY 3	Greek yogurt		Classic Tuna Salad (page 56)		Curried Chicken Salad (page 57)
DAY 4	Best Scrambled Eggs (page 55)		Shrimp Cocktail Salad (page 115)		Slow Cooker Barbecue Shredded Chicken (page 135) Mashed Cauliflower (page 76)
DAY 5	Hearty Slow Cooker Cinnamon Oatmeal (page 63)		Classic Tuna Salad (page 56)		Noodle-less Lasagna with Ricotta Cheese (page 59)
DAY 6	Greek yogurt		Curried Chicken Salad (page 57)		Shrimp Cocktail Salad (page 115)
DAY 7	Best Scrambled Eggs (page 55)		Refried Black Beans (page 58) Cottage cheese mixed with taco seasoning		Slow Cooker Barbecue Shredded Chicken (page 135) Mashed Cauliflower (page 76)

## WEEK 4

# SOFT DIET S

As you move from liquids to more solid foods, remember that you may feel fuller quickly and may not be able to eat the full portion of food you planned on eating to meet protein needs. Use High-Protein Milk (page 44), milk, and/or protein shakes between meals to help reach protein goals. Focus on eating food at mealtimes to establish good eating patterns. You may use a protein shake as an occasional meal substitute. Many people find it difficult to eat solid foods in the morning and choose to substitute breakfast with a protein shake on a daily basis.

Portions during this stage will vary. You should be able to eat about 1/2 cup (4 ounces) of food per sitting. Adjust the nutrition fact information according to the portion of food you eat to make sure you are getting adequate protein.

Here are some specific tips for this week's meal plan:

- ▶ Use leftover chicken from Whole Herbed Roasted Chicken in the Slow Cooker (page 136) to make the Creamy Chicken Soup with Cauliflower (page 121).
- ▶ Pair steamed/well-cooked vegetables with the Herb-Crusted Salmon (page 108) or Lemon-Parsley Crab Cakes (page 114)—but focus on eating the protein first.
- ▶ Use canned tuna and crab for the Lemon-Parsley Crab Cakes (page 114), Tuna Noodle-less Casserole (page 106), and Classic Tuna Salad (page 56) to save on prep time, and stock up when it's on sale.