

ON TRACK WITH BARIX

Support to Keep You On Track With a Healthful Lifestyle

Developing a Support Team

Building your team for long-term success

Getting the right support after bariatric surgery can enhance recovery and long-term success. The best way to get support is to explain what you need, why you need it—and to ask for it. It sounds easy, but real-life interpersonal relationships may make getting the support you need a little more challenging than that.

Support can come from all sorts of places: spouses, family members, co-workers, friends, your bariatric surgery team, support groups, and online resources. For many, it is helpful to develop support from more than one source—you'll often get different kinds of support from each source. For example, your children may hop on board with healthier snacks and meal selections; your co-workers may provide fresh fruit in place of (or in addition to) cake for birthday celebrations; and a good friend may go for walks with you. Take a look at the different places where support may be available to and think through a strategy to strengthen the support in as many areas as you need.

Support is more likely to happen if you work to develop it, rather than just hoping it will occur. People are often willing to support your efforts to improve your health, but don't always know how to best support you. If not guided, their support can turn into not-so-helpful practices like policing every morsel that

you put into your mouth or, on the other extreme, over-concern for the smaller amounts of food you're eating.

In general, be honest and share your hopes, goals, and needs with those you'd like support from. Clearly express your gratitude in advance for their help. Share information about your surgery: how you expect it to improve your health and well-being, and how it will change your eating behaviors and lifestyle. If you have not yet had surgery, think through (and ask others who have already had surgery) what challenges you are likely to face.

Members of Your Team

Youself

You are the most important member of your support team. Keeping yourself mentally and physically in the game is essential for long-term success. Success is up to you—no one can do the work for you...and no one can take away the work that you do. That is why you are the leader of your team. To be a strong support leader:

- Find ways to stay positive, even through challenges.
- Follow your bariatric surgery team's recommendations and ask for help if you are not reaching goals.
- Be accountable to yourself or a member of your support team.



- Realize that you will need to work to have a healthy weight for the rest of your life, but you are worth the efforts and improvements in your health and wellbeing.
- Make the effort to develop stress management and healthy coping skills before you need them.
- When you hit a bump in the road, learn from it and get back on track quickly.
- Surround yourself with positive people who are willing to be on your team and support you in your efforts.

Spouse/Significant Other

Spouses and significant others can have the most to gain or lose from your weight loss surgery. Your spouse may be 100% supportive and enjoy the journey right by your side. This happens when they don't feel threatened by the physical changes and the often increased confidence that shines through as your excess weight disappears. Their support is apparent as they are willing to change household foods and may even surprise you with a new elliptical to make your exercise routine easier. This relationship will most likely strengthen with the changes that weight loss surgery often brings.

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Other spouses may fear your improved appearance and confidence. They may love you the way that you are and interpret the positive changes in you as a rejection of them. They may not welcome new work or social opportunities that become available to you. Providing open communication and reassurances may be helpful. Do be aware that some spouses will attempt to sabotage your efforts in an effort to keep the status quo. Working with a trained therapist individually or as a couple may help to overcome these struggles.

Parents

The emotional attachment of a parent to a child may reduce their ability to have a non-emotional assessment of the risks versus the benefits of weight loss surgery, even if the evidence is overwhelmingly positive, as it is for most considering surgery. Parents may also harbor some feelings of guilt—that they had a hand in creating your excess weight. They may be slow to come on board, but parents can be your biggest supporters once they understand the benefits that the surgery can provide.

Children

Children living in the home can have significant benefits from your weight loss surgery—healthier food options and an active role-model positively impacting their lifestyle habits now and for years to come. They may not appreciate those benefits—at least not right away, although if you approach the changes in a positive way, you may get more cooperation. For example, explain that you will be able to participate in more of their activities as weight loss typically provides a surge of energy and fewer aches and pains. Provide them with as much detail as possible for specific things they can do to help you. Perhaps plan a family trip that you've been delaying as a reward to all of you for your new healthy behaviors.

Co-workers

Most people spend a large portion of their time at work. This is an important



place to either gather support or build up a strong healthy eating strategy solo. You've probably already assessed your co-workers and know if they are going to be good supporters or negative nancies. If you've got some folks in your workplace that will support your efforts and rejoice in your successes, by all means, educate them on your surgery and ask for their help. For the others, it is totally your call on who you decide to inform of your surgery. A simple, "I've cut down on portions sizes and increased my exercise," is a good response to the question, "How you are losing weight?" Make sure you have a good plan in place to avoid workplace hazards—donuts in the breakroom, candy on a co-worker's desk, less-than-healthy vending or cafeteria food, and the daily lunch delivery.

Friends

Friends will often either be for the surgery or against the surgery. Overweight friends may have mixed feelings about your weight loss. They may be happy for you, but your weight loss may make them feel worse about themselves. Preparing yourself for a wide range of responses to your weight loss may be the best thing you can do as the leader of your support group team. Be prepared to accept that friendships may flourish or may wither. Look for opportunities to develop new supportive friendships. Choose to surround yourself with those people who are positive and support your efforts to improve your health.

Your Barix Clinics Team

We want to cheer your successes and help you problem-solve challenges.

Don't hesitate to contact us between appointments. Please realize that although you may be embarrassed to ask a question or admit a challenge, we are a very non-judgmental group. You will not disappoint us by being honest. We work for you and value the opportunity to be a part of your journey.

Support Groups

There is really nothing like the support of those who have walked in your shoes. In-person and online support groups are a great way to get information and inspiration. You'll gain valuable insight from others' successes and their struggles. Online, you can ask a question at any hour of the day and get a response (or several) back right away. Getting and giving support is a great way to develop friendships and strong support relationships.

Therapist

Utilizing the services of a professional therapist can help you to work through emotional issues and put some solid stress management skills in place. Setting aside structured time each week to work through issues and build new skills is essential. Most people are not very likely to do that on their own. The insight of someone who is trained and not close to the emotions of your particular situation may be able to help you make breakthrough progress that wouldn't otherwise happen.

When you're developing your support team, be patient with people. The changes in you impact them in some way and change can be difficult. Be open and provide gentle education and guidance—asking clearly for what you need. Many will adjust with time and your relationship will be stronger than ever. Your journey may be richer if you are able to develop a strong group of supporters around you, but also remember that you don't need anyone but yourself to be successful. With the help of bariatric surgery, you need to take control of your food and exercise behaviors. Be determined and steadfast in your daily efforts.

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Reconstructive SURGERY

To receive a free Reconstructive Surgery Guide, call **800-282-0066** or send us an email at rc@barixclinics.com with your name and contact information. Our reconstructive surgery program is currently performed at our centers in Michigan, and Pennsylvania. **Call us today for more information!**

Share Your **SUCCESS**

Tell us about how your life has changed as a result of your weight loss surgery. Your story may be printed in this publication or on one of our websites and can serve as an inspiration to others.

Submit your story online
www.barixclinicsstore.com/share_your_story.html.

We'd love to hear from you!

QUESTIONS ABOUT FINANCING YOUR SURGERY?

Call a Barix Patient
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Recipes

Roasted Vegetables

1 bunch asparagus, sliced into 2-3" pieces, discard ends
 1 whole red onion, peeled and cut into large pieces
 1 whole red bell pepper, seeded and cut into large pieces
 8 ounces, mushrooms, quartered
 1 medium-sized eggplant, cut into large pieces
 1/2 butternut squash, peeled and cut into large pieces
 3 cloves garlic, minced
 1/2 teaspoons salt
 1/2 teaspoon pepper
 1 teaspoon Montreal steak seasoning
 1/3 cup olive oil

Preheat oven to 450 degrees. Combine all veggies in a large bowl. Drizzle with olive oil and season. Toss until evenly covered.

Spread vegetables out on two baking sheets. Roast for 20-30 minutes, flipping the vegetables twice during that time. Makes 8 servings.

NUTRITION FACTS PER SERVING:
 122 calories, 2 grams protein, 9 grams fat, 9 grams carbohydrate, 244 mg sodium.



Pizza Chicken Bake

14 oz pizza sauce, look for one without added sugar
 16 oz chicken breasts, boneless, skinless
 1 T olive oil
 1 tsp. oregano
 1 tsp. garlic powder
 6 oz. part-skim Mozzarella, sliced thin or shredded
 1 oz. sliced pepperoni

Preheat oven to 400 F. Reduce the pizza sauce (to prevent a runny dish) by heating in a small saucepan over low heat for about 20 minutes until it is reduced to 1 cup.

Trim the chicken breasts and place one at a time inside a heavy plastic bag; pound to flatten the chicken. Sprinkle oregano and garlic on both sides of chicken. Heat olive oil over medium-high heat in a large non-stick skillet or an electric griddle. Add the chicken and cook 1-2 minutes on each side to brown the chicken.

Spray a glass casserole dish with cooking spray and add chicken in a single layer. Top chicken evenly with reduced pizza sauce, mozzarella cheese and pepperoni slices. Bake uncovered about 25-30 minutes—the cheese should be melted and starting to brown. Makes 5 servings.

NUTRITION FACTS PER SERVING:
 283 calories, 31 grams protein, 14 grams fat, 7 grams carbohydrate, 649 mg sodium.

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