

Weight Loss Stalls

*Maureen Miletics, RN, BSN, MS, CBN
Director of Bariatric Services*



A frequent topic on the web forum is "weight loss stalls." A weight loss stall is an extended stretch of time where your efforts are not resulting in weight loss. Some patients may experience a stall in their weight loss days after surgery, some weeks after surgery, and some may not get their first stall until months after surgery. Regardless of when it happens, you are not alone. But why do these even happen especially when you are eating so much less? Let's talk about some related topics.

When you lose weight rapidly chances are you are losing lean body mass (muscle) and fat. Your muscle plays a big part in the burning of calories by keeping your metabolic rate higher so you want to hold onto your muscle and even make more muscle. Eating 60 to 75 grams of protein per day will help maintain lean body (muscle) mass. Metabolic rate is the amount of energy (calories) your body will burn at rest while just maintaining your bodily functions like breathing, circulating blood, repairing cells and changing hormone levels, for example. An increased metabolic rate is not the only reason for keeping muscle. You want to keep muscle so you can use them to exercise and burn even more calories. Weak muscles make exercise more difficult so build muscle with strength-training and aerobic work.

We always hear that eating too much causes weight loss to stop. But how about not eating enough calories? If you are losing weight rapidly due to a drastic drop in food and/or calorie intake, your body will naturally slow down its metabolism in order to conserve energy. It goes into kind of a hibernation mode. Your body thinks you are "starving" and holds onto every last calorie. Make sure you are taking in the correct amount of food for the amount of time you are post operatively.

Never skip meals. If you are exercising frequently, you may need to add an extra protein shake to fuel your body. Of course, the opposite may be true. Are you eating more than you should which is causing calorie abundance and fat storage? Refer to your manual for meal measurements and calorie intake suggestions and make sure you are drinking plenty of water throughout the day. Water aids in maintaining bodily functions.

Another thing that can slow down weight loss through increased hunger is sleep deprivation. Those who do not get at least six to eight hours of sleep per night are at greater risk of increased ghrelin levels (hormone that makes you hungry) and decreased leptin (hormone that decreases hunger).



If you do the same routine every single day your body may be accustomed to this. Make a change to get things moving again.

Here are quick tips for getting through a stall:

1. Exercise! And if you do the same exercise, change up your exercise routines. Use different muscle groups.
2. Concentrate on protein to help keep muscle.
3. Stay well hydrated
4. Make sure you are getting enough protein/calories if you are exercising a lot or if it is time for a meal-volume change. If it is not time for a volume change or you are at maintenance, make sure you are not eating too much throughout the day.
5. Get at least six to eight hours of sleep per night.
6. Follow all the rules of the pouch/sleeve every single day and for life. If you fall off the wagon, just get back in and start over.