

PROTEIN

Protein supplements are available in many forms and are useful for bariatric surgery post-ops, as they help us meet our total daily intake requirements. Since our stomachs are so small, most of us have a hard time consuming proteins from native food sources, like meat, fish, poultry, dairy or legumes. Therefore, protein shakes (Ready-to-drink or RTDs that come in cans or boxes), clear drinks (like Gatorade), powders (for blending into creamy shakes or adding to water), and bars can be extremely useful. Since all of us like different things, it's good to know that there is a wide variety of high quality options available.

The first thing you should know about supplemental protein is, it is available from several, different sources, most especially: **Whey, Soy, Rice, Egg** and even **Micellar Casein**. Some are better sources of protein and are more readily available than others; some taste better than others; and some don't work for people who are allergic to dairy or soy, and so on. You will soon find out what works for you, but until that time, it is recommended that you NOT stock up on any particular protein type, until you know you tolerate it well!

The second thing you should know is, not all proteins are created equal! Many protein supplements are geared toward weight lifters and athletes looking to "bulk up" and "build muscle." These products contain HIGH carbs, HIGH sugars and HIGH fats. These are NOT the proper products for bariatric post-ops!

When looking for an appropriate protein supplement for yourself, look first at the total grams of PROTEIN. A good average number for a drink is 20 grams per serving. Many people choose drinks that contain 30-40 grams per serving, but not everyone can tolerate that much in one sitting. Through trial and error, you will learn what works best for you. Whatever the case, it is BEST to shoot for at least 20 grams in your drink as a starting point, and go from there.

The next area on the label is SUGAR. How many grams of sugar are there? Many post-ops report that they cannot tolerate anything over about 9 grams per serving, as it can cause dumping (for gastric bypassers). A safe rule of thumb is to keep it under 3 grams, but every *body* is different. If the grams of sugar exceed 10, it's probably best to steer clear of the product. There is no magical "ratio" of protein-to-sugar, but you will be amazed to find many products claiming to be "healthy" which contain 15-20 grams of sugar and only 10 grams of protein! That is almost 2:1 SUGARS leading PROTEIN! Not a good combination! Look for a product that has at least twice as much (if not more) protein as sugar.

To find products that are low in sugar, look for products that do not contain: corn syrup, honey, cane juice, fructose or other "natural" sweetening agents. Low sugar grams usually come from aspartame (Equal™), sucralose (Splenda®), saccharine (Sweet N' Low™), maltodextrine, maltitol, etc. These are sugar alcohols, which are often (but not always) called out separately on the label. These can affect post-ops in multiple ways, including causing dumping, so many choose to avoid those products with HIGH sugar alcohols (i.e., 10g >). There is also debate about artificial sweeteners being unhealthy, etc., so as with everything in your new life, moderation is the key to success and health!

After you have examined the protein and sugar content, you can look at the total carbs, fats and calories. A good rule of thumb is to target about 200–300 calories for a meal replacement type protein shake. This number would include any skim soy milk added in place of water. If the protein, sugar and calories look "pretty good," then chances are, the fats and carbs will fall into line nicely. Having said that, never assume anything, and ALWAYS read the label. Your body will not give you a free pass, just because you don't "know" something. Carbs tend to be higher (15 grams +) in things like protein bars and chips, and these are not necessarily going to be the "good" or "complex" carbs found in fruits, veggies and beans. As long as you are aware of this number and factor it into your overall daily allowance, you will be fine! Keep fats around 5 grams or less per serving.

Consider blending different forms of supplements into your diet, to add variety, texture, taste and options to your life. Post-op living is NOT a diet; it's a lifestyle, so there is no excuse (or room) for boredom!

Here are some brands that seem to work well for a large number of post-ops:

WHEY BASED PROTEINS

COSTCO BRAND (PREMIER)

Costco seems to be a winner for most post-ops, so I've listed it first. Their Premier brand offers RTDs, blendables, bars and water additives.



Premier Bars

Carry them with you for on-the-go, at your fingertips protein.



Premier RTD Shakes

No blender required.
Just chill, shake and drink!



Premier Protein H2O Drink Mix

Add these to water, like Crystal Light.

CLEAR WHEY RTD PROTEINS (like Gatorade)



CytoSport Pure Protein

This is available at GNC, Vitamin Shoppe, Mothers, and several online locations.



WheyUp!

Protein drink with an added Energy boost. This one does contain caffeine, so not recommended for early post-ops, or those abstaining from caffeine.



Isopure

Available in 6 yummy flavors.

BLENDABLE WHEY (Make in a blender or shaker bottle)
Since there are so many of these, I'm just going to include a single link to [BariatricEating.com protein](#) page, but I'll also list names of the proteins that people in our group swear by!

- [Protein Sample Starter Kit](#)
- [BSN Syntha-6](#)
- [IDS Multi Pro](#)
- [Elite](#)
- [Matrix](#)
- [Nectar](#)
- [Whey Gourmet!](#)
- [Inspire](#) (BE's private label)
- [100% Designer Whey](#)
- Trader Joe's Brand Protein

Protein Shots/Bullets

Super portable protein in a test tube. Add to water or shoot 'em straight. Most people suggest serving chilled.



[IDS Sports New Whey Liquid Protein](#)
Also Costco Premier Brand.



COFFEE TYPE PROTEINS

(Like Starbucks's Frappuccino with Protein)

These drinks do contain caffeine, but for those post-ops who are further out and can handle this once in awhile, this is a nice treat.

[Believe](#) (BE's private label; replaced AchieveOne)

Vitamins

The jury is still out on vitamins, depending upon who you talk to. One thing is sure: You must take vitamins everyday, without fail, for the rest of your life. Case closed. How much of each you take will be up to you and your doctor, but regular blood tests will ensure you stay healthy and don't end up needing iron transfusions or suffering from brittle bones. The current recommendation is: Iron, Calcium Citrate, B12 (sublingual), B1, and a Multi-Vitamin. There are vitamins formulated specifically for bariatric patients (gastric bypass or band), and they are available as chewables. Note that some doctors will say "Tums, Flintstones and some iron" are all you need, but successful post-ops will encourage higher-quality calcium and a better multi-vitamin. Think: Citracal and Centrum.

- [Bariatric Advantage](#)
- [Celebrate!](#)

Protein Bars

- [Pure Protein Bars](#) (Trader Joe's)
- [Atkins Advantage Bars](#)
- [Power Crunch Bars](#)
- [Rockin' Roll Bars](#) (by Labrada)
- [Oh Yeah! Wafer Bars](#)

Protein Snacks

- [Kay's Naturals Pretzels](#)
- [Kay's Naturals Cereals](#)
- [Revival Soy Chips](#)
- Kefir
- [Fage](#) Available at Trader Joe's

SOY, RICE AND OTHER PROTEINS

Some people are lactose intolerant, which means they cannot tolerate WHEY protein. If you are one of these people, fear not! There are protein sources for you!

- Trader Joe's Soy Protein Powder
- [SoySlender](#) Milk (chocolate, vanilla and cappuccino)
Available at Albertsons, WalMart, Vitacost.com, Netition.com
- Trader Joe's Unsweetened Soy Milk
- [Soy SilkNutriBiotic Vegan Brand Brown Rice Protein](#)

SHOPPING!

Don't know where to buy pouch-friendly foods?

Online stores:

- [BariatricEating.com](#)
- [VitaCost.com](#)
- [NutritionExpress.com](#)
- [Revival Soy](#)
- [Netrition.com](#)

Brick and Mortar Stores:

- Trader Joe's
- Costco
- Mothers
- Henry's
- Sprouts
- Herbies
- GNC
- Vitamin Shoppe
- 24-Hour Fitness

Gas and Other Fun Stuff

Gas is a way of life for most post-ops, either because we are malabsorptive, or because we just have trouble with things like lactose and fiber! Whatever the case, there are lots of OTC (over-the-counter) remedies you can *try*, including:

- Gas-X
- Gaviscon
- [Devrom](#)
- Phazyme
- Lactaid

For constipation and irregularity (that often comes with iron supplementation), try a stool softener, fiber additive or healthy bacteria – every day:

- [Colace](#)
- [Phillips](#)
- Kirkland Brand (Costco)
- [Benefiber](#)
- [Probiotic](#)