

PREGNANCY (DOC-10)

Pregnancy: We ask that you prevent pregnancy for at least 18-24 months after your surgery or until cleared by your surgeon. This is the time for rapid weight loss and is **not** conducive to maintaining the health of a fetus. We ask that you use two forms of birth control, such as barrier and chemical forms or barrier and pill forms of birth control once the doctor has released you to start taking the birth control pill. Maternal malnutrition may impair normal fetal development after surgery. All patients who are losing weight, at a rapid rate, are in some way suffering some form of malnutrition.

Pregnancy should be postponed until your weight has become stable for some time. After the initial 18-24 months, your meal portions should become normalized and your nutritional status become adequate to sustain health for a growing fetus. Women who become pregnant after WLS should receive specific attention from the surgical care team along with their obstetrician. **We will need to know the name and address of your OB/GYN so that we may send them an information packet to inform them as to the procedure you have undergone and what to monitor.** Many patients have become pregnant after DS without any difficulty, but they do need to be watched more closely and they also need to make sure they are taking all necessary vitamins, minerals and proteins.

- Folic acid, one of the B vitamins, has been found to prevent neural tube defects (NTD). Increased intake of folic acid reduces the risk of NTDs such as anencephaly and spina bifida (open spine) by as much of 50 to 70 % if women take enough of it before conception and in the early months of pregnancy. Take your multivitamins containing 400 mg of folic acid (the standard in most multivitamins) every day.
- Vitamin A is also important to prevent blindness in the fetus. Vitamin A levels should be drawn prior to becoming pregnant and during the pregnancy.
- Protein is important in all structural formation of the fetus and the mother needs to increase protein intake by at least 30 grams daily. Nearly all tissue formation involves the necessity of protein.

Many morbidly obese patients also have fertility problems, but after WLS they will frequently be able to become pregnant once the weight loss begins. **Do not get pregnant until your weight has stabilized after 18 to 24 months. Please notify the office immediately upon learning of your pregnancy. Use at least TWO forms of birth control during the first 18-24 months!**