

Carbohydrate Loading Before Surgery

What is carbohydrate loading?

Carbohydrate is a source of energy. “Loading” means making sure your body has carbohydrates. Drinking carbohydrates the day of surgery can help provide energy for healing and improve recovery.

Why is carbohydrate loading important before surgery?

- Your body needs energy for healing after surgery. If your body cannot get enough energy from carbohydrates, some of the protein in your muscles may start to break down. This can make you feel tired and weak. This can also delay how fast your incision heals.
- Carbohydrate helps control blood sugar levels. This is important even if you do not have diabetes.
- Carbohydrate loading may also help prevent nausea and vomiting following surgery.

What carbohydrate will I use for loading to prepare for my surgery?

- A powdered carbohydrate (maltodextrin) will be given to you by your surgeon. It is absorbed quickly and has a light, sweet taste.
- You will get 1 bottle, containing 50 grams of carbohydrate.

Instructions for the day of surgery

- About 3 hours before your scheduled surgery time, add the carbohydrate powder from the bottle to 1 ½ cups (12 ounces) of water.
- Drink the mixture.
- Be sure to finish this drink 3 hours before your scheduled surgery time.