

## Planning for Bariatric (Weight Loss) Surgery – Budgeting

Although this surgery is funded by OHIP, there are extra costs that come with:

- getting ready for surgery and
- staying safe and healthy while losing weight after surgery

**Before you decide to have this surgery, you need to think about these costs and decide how you will budget for them.**

### **OPTIFAST diet before surgery:**

- Everyone follows this liver-shrinking diet before surgery. You could be on this diet for 2 to 5 weeks before surgery. The length of time depends what your surgeon decides for you.
- OPTIFAST is not covered by drug benefit plans or other income support plans such as ODSP and OW.
- Plan to spend \$200 to \$400 for OPTIFAST before surgery.

### **Liquid protein supplement:**

- After surgery you go through many stages of diet as your body adjusts. In the beginning, you will be drinking several bottles a day of liquid protein supplement recommended by the dietitian.
- Liquid protein supplements are not covered by drug benefit plans or other income support plans such as ODSP and OW.
- Plan to spend between \$150 and \$250 on liquid protein supplements for 1 month after surgery.

### **Vitamin and mineral supplements:**

- You must take vitamin and mineral supplements for the rest of your life to make sure you get the right amount of nutrition and do not develop deficiencies. This is very important. You must take a pre-natal vitamin and calcium citrate with vitamin D. You will also have to have other vitamins which the dietitian will recommend.
- The vitamin and mineral supplements are not covered by drug benefit plans or other income support plans such as ODSP and OW.

### **Vitamin and mineral supplements (continued):**

- The price of these supplements varies, depending on where you shop and if you can find sales. Buying in bulk can be less expensive.
- Start looking around before surgery to see how much vitamins will cost. Plan to spend \$20.00 to \$50.00 a month on vitamins for the rest of your life. Be prepared to spend more if you have a nutrition deficiency after surgery.

### **Other expenses such as travel (gas), parking, time off work for surgery and appointments before and after surgery:**

- If you have to travel a long distance to be assessed for bariatric surgery, you may be able to apply for a government subsidy such as the Northern Health Travel Grant to help with the costs for travel and accommodation.
- You may have to take time off work to come to appointments before surgery, have surgery, and safely recover at home. There are many follow-up appointments as well.
- You need to make sure that you can afford the travel, accommodation and parking expenses that come with this surgery as well as time off work. All follow-up appointments are very important and you must come to them.

### **Eating a healthy, well balanced diet:**

- Eating a healthy, balanced diet needs planning and budgeting. You may find that your grocery bill is more as you adjust to new ways of preparing meals and eating.
- You should start eating a healthy, balanced diet before surgery so that your body and budget are prepared for the changes.

### **Making a decision to have surgery or not:**

- If you think that you may have problems managing any of these changes in your life because of finances, ask yourself if this is the right time to have bariatric surgery.

### **Asking for help:**

- If you have concerns, you can talk to the social worker to help you decide what is right for you and ways you budget for surgery.