Medication Issues after Bariatric Surgery
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Bariatric surgery reduces the surface area of the stomach, which causes several issues with medication and vitamin/mineral absorption. It is important to note every medication’s formulation. Commonly, medications are available as immediate release liquids, tablets and capsules. They can also come as extended release, sustained release, and time release products.

Immediate release products:
- Dissolve and get absorbed right away in the stomach

Extended release and sustained release products:
- Are made to deliver medication over an extended time period.
- Many times, they require different parts of the stomach and small intestine to deliver the appropriate amount of medication.
- Gastric bypass surgery makes your stomach into a small pouch and shortens your intestine. Products that are extended release and sustained release will not be absorbed properly. It is best to avoid these products.

Therefore, immediate release products are the best choice for a patient after bariatric surgery.

Please note, some medications come as a transdermal patch, which can be applied on your skin, or as a sublingual formulation, which is put under your tongue.

If you are having trouble determining if a medication is immediate release, consider a liquid formulation because many medications that come as a liquid are immediate release products. You can also ask your pharmacist which products are appropriate for you to take.

There are medications that should be avoided after any bariatric surgery, including gastric bypass, sleeve gastrectomy and adjustable gastric band surgeries. These medications are aspirin and nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (NSAIDs). These medications can be irritating to your stomach after surgery and can increase your chance of developing an ulcer in your stomach.

Be careful of combination or multi-symptom products because these products may contain medications you should avoid. It is important to read all ingredients of a product to make sure these medications are not part of the product.
Medications to AVOID after bariatric surgery:
- Aspirin and aspirin-containing products like Pepto-Bismol and Alka Seltzer
- NSAIDs like Motrin, Aleve and Advil
- Extended release, sustained release and time release products

Important points to remember after bariatric surgery:
- Always take your vitamin and/or mineral supplements. These supplements are important to keep your body in balance and help you avoid complications.
- Remember to tell your health care providers that you have had bariatric surgery. Your doctors may need to change the dose or how you take your medications to make sure it is effective for you.