

The importance of oral health in pre- and post-operative bariatric patients.

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Over the past few years, bariatric surgery has become a viable option for obesity treatment. Being a multifactorial disease, different professionals play an important role in the preparation for surgery and its follow-up. The relations between oral health (or lack of it) and obesity have increasingly brought dentists closer to the bariatric multidisciplinary team.

Diabetes, periodontal diseases, personal eating habits and dental caries, and even dental absences or the use of maladaptive dentures are issues that must be addressed before surgery. This is because the reduced capacity of the stomach forces patients to chew more often, generating more effort and impact in the dental and periodontal structures. The lack of a good dentition structure means less masticatory capacity with lower nutrient absorption, and a lower number of teeth means less consumption of fiber and proteins, increasing the demand for foods that are easier to chew, for example carbohydrates.

Oral health in the preoperative stage has become a minimum condition for the patient that is going to face a whole amount of changes in his/her eating habits.

After surgery, patients may be more vulnerable to dental caries because of the prolonged meals. The amount of meals, as well as food quality, modification of the salivary activity and modified PH value lead to cariogenic capacity's increase of the biofilm on the dental surface, and also increase the probability of periodontal diseases.

Surgery techniques can also impact the absorption of nutrients, such as protein and essential vitamins that can generate instabilities in oral structures.

Recently, several authors have reported the high index of reflux related to Sleeve gastrectomy. The constant acid fluids destroy the dental structures (enamel and dentin). It is also important to point out that patients with dentinal hypersensitivity frequently present more risks. In conclusion, the bariatric patient should be warned about the importance of the maintenance of oral health and full masticatory functions, and the dentist should be a essential part of the multidisciplinary team.

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