

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS ABOUT WEIGHT-LOSS SURGERY (FAQS)

We are glad you have chosen the *Bingham Healthcare Empower Clinic* and our weight-loss specialists to walk hand-in-hand with you during this important life journey. We have compiled a thorough list of the questions most frequently asked by patients about weight-loss surgery. If there are any other questions that you need answered, please contact your surgeon or the program coordinator. We want you to be completely informed about your chosen procedure.

What is obesity?

Obesity results from the excess accumulation of fat that exceeds the body's skeletal and physical standards. Over 97 million Americans, more than one-third of the adult population, are overweight or obese. An estimated 5 to 10 million of those are considered morbidly obese.

What is morbid obesity?

Obesity becomes "morbid" when it reaches the point of significantly increasing the risk of one or more obesity-related health conditions or serious diseases (known as co-morbidities) that result either in significant physical disability or even death.

How is morbid obesity defined?

Morbid obesity is defined as being 100 pounds or more over ideal body weight or having a Body Mass Index (BMI) of 40 or greater. According to the American Society for Bariatric Surgery, morbid obesity is a serious disease and must be treated as such. It is a chronic disease, meaning that its symptoms increase slowly over an extended period of time.

How is Body Mass Index (BMI) calculated?

BMI is calculated by dividing body weight in pounds by height in inches squared, and multiplying the amount by 703.

What is an "ideal" Body Mass Index?

Ideal BMI is between 19 and 24.9. If you have a BMI between 25 and

29.9, you are considered to be overweight. A BMI of 30 or over is considered obese. At a BMI of 40 or more, one is considered morbidly obese.

What causes morbid obesity?

The reasons for obesity are multiple and complex. Despite conventional wisdom, it is not simply a result of overeating. Research has shown that, in many cases, a significant underlying cause of morbid obesity is genetic. Studies have demonstrated that once the problem is established, efforts such as dieting and exercise programs have a limited ability to provide effective long-term relief.

Is it true that being morbidly obese can kill me?

Yes. Morbid obesity brings with it an increased risk for a shorter life expectancy. For individuals whose weight exceeds twice their ideal body weight, the risk of an early death is doubled

compared to non-obese individuals. The risk of death from diabetes or heart attack is 5 to 7 times greater.

What are some of the obesity-related conditions that can occur?

- ✓ Cancer
- ✓ Depression
- ✓ Heart Disease
- ✓ High Blood Pressure
- ✓ High Cholesterol
- ✓ Infertility
- ✓ Insulin Resistance
- ✓ Menstrual Irregularities
- ✓ Osteoarthritis of Weight Bearing Joints
- ✓ Pulmonary Embolus/Blood Clots
- ✓ Reflux and Heartburn
- ✓ Skin Breakdown
- ✓ Sleep Apnea
- ✓ Swollen Legs
- ✓ Type II Diabetes
- ✓ Urinary Incontinence

What are treatment options for morbid obesity?

For anyone who has considered treatment for weight loss, there is certainly no shortage of choices. Options include non-surgical and surgical programs.

Non-surgical weight-loss programs are based on some combination of diet and behavior modification and regular exercise. Unfortunately, less than 5 percent of individuals who participate in non-surgical weight loss programs will lose a significant amount of weight and maintain that loss for a long period of time. Most of these people will regain their weight within one year.

Bingham Healthcare Empower Clinic has three safe and effective surgical weight-loss options to help combat morbid obesity:

1. Gastric Bypass
2. Sleeve Gastrectomy
3. Balloon

What is Gastric Bypass (Roux-En-Y) Surgery?

This surgery limits the amount of food a patient can eat and the amount of calories the body will absorb. By separating the stomach into an upper and lower section, consumed food will only go into the upper stomach, which is called the “pouch.” The stomach pouch after surgery will only be able to hold as much food as the size of an egg. This surgery also connects a part of the small intestine into a hole in the pouch, creating a new pathway for the food a patient consumes.

What is Gastric Sleeve Surgery (Sleeve Gastrectomy)?

Gastric Sleeve is the most popular weight-loss surgeries today, this procedure limits the amount of food you can eat by reducing the size of your stomach. This limits the amount of food that can be eaten and leaves the patient feeling full sooner and for a longer period of time. This surgery also decreases the hunger stimulating hormone—ghrelin.

Can I ever eat regular food again after weight loss surgery?

When the time comes to resume eating “regular” food, you must learn to adapt to a new way of eating. Patients are restricted to approximately ½ cup of food before feeling uncomfortably full. Patients who learn to eat slowly, eat less, and do not drink carbonated beverages or snack, are those who have best results.

What causes failure?

Failure to achieve the expected level of weight loss is usually the result of failing to comply with the recommended dietary and behavior modifications given through the Empower Program, such as increased exercise, following dietary recommendations, and regular support group attendance. Failure to take vitamins and calcium can also lead to less than desired results.

What is informed consent and why is it important?

Informed consent is a legal term meaning that a person agrees that they have received, and understood, enough information about a procedure’s benefits and risks to allow them to make a decision that is right for them. Your surgeon will require you to sign a consent form before performing a procedure. Before you sign a consent form, you should have a solid understanding of what is about to take place. You should know what you would need to do to live well after the operation. And you should be aware of the signs or symptoms of complications that may occur after your surgery. If you are not sure of any of these issues, you are encouraged to *please ask questions*.

Does weight loss surgery guarantee successful weight loss?

It is important to remember that there are no ironclad guarantees in any kind of medicine or surgery. There can be unexpected outcomes in even the simplest procedures. What can be said, however, is that weight loss surgery will only succeed when you make a life-long commitment to adopt a new way of healthier living.

Some of the challenges facing anyone after weight loss surgery can be expected. Lifestyle changes can strain relationships within families, between close friends and couples. To help you achieve your weight loss goals, you need to attend support groups, and all clinic follow up appointments. The surgery is only a tool to help you reach your goals. Your ultimate success depends on strict adherence to the recommended dietary, exercise, and lifestyle changes.

Are the dietary guidelines permanent?

Yes. You must change your pre-operative eating habits to have a successful surgical outcome. You will be given all the necessary guidelines you need to follow during pre- and post-operation education classes.

What are some dietary guidelines?

- ✓ Avoid alcohol
- ✓ Chew all solid food thoroughly. You will not be able to eat chunks of meat if they are not ground or chewed thoroughly.
- ✓ Don't drink fluids while eating
- ✓ No mindless snacking
- ✓ Omit carbonated drinks, high-calorie nutritional supplements, milk shakes, and high-fat foods.
- ✓ Omit desserts and other items with sugar listed as one of the first three ingredients.

When can I go back to work?

Your ability to resume pre-surgery levels of activity will vary according to your pre-operative physical condition, the nature of the activity, and the type of weight loss surgery you had. Many people can return to full pre-surgery levels of activity relatively soon. Your surgeon will outline activity restrictions at discharge.

When can I get pregnant?

It is strongly advised that women of childbearing age use the most effective forms of birth control until weight has stabilized in a healthy weight range for at least 1 year after weight loss surgery.

Is it necessary to have long-term follow-up?

Yes. Although the short-term effects of weight loss surgery are well understood, there are still questions to be answered about the longer-term effects on nutrition and body systems. Follow-up care is recommended, and expected, for life.

How important are the support groups?

Support group attendance is *very* important for long-term success. Support groups provide weight loss surgery patients with an excellent opportunity to discuss their various personal and professional issues. Most learn, for example, that weight loss surgery will not immediately resolve existing emotional issues or heal the years of damage that morbid obesity might have inflicted on their emotional well-being. Support groups assist with short- and long-term goals, and have helped produce the greatest level of success for weight loss surgery patients.