

When you begin to receive treatment for obesity, you will encounter several different professionals who will help guide you along your journey. Read on to learn more about who these individuals are and how they can help you reach your care goals.

Primary Care Physician—Your primary care doctor's role is to diagnose any medical conditions you have, provide you with education, and prescribe treatment plans.



Obesity Medicine Specialist—An obesity medicine specialist is a doctor who has had special training in treating patients with obesity. They have a broad understanding of the genetic, environmental, social, and behavioral factors that contribute to obesity. They are skilled at managing obesity with interventions such as diet, physical activity, behavioral change, and medication.

Bariatric Surgeon—

A bariatric surgeon is a skilled doctor who can perform a variety of different specialized weight-loss surgeries, including gastric bypass, sleeve gastrectomy, and gastric band surgery.



Physician Assistants, Nurse Practitioners, and Nurses

Physician assistants may provide a broad range of services under the supervision of a physician. Nurse practitioners may provide direct medical care services and practice independently, depending on state regulations. Registered nurses provide clinical care and case management services and may provide home care services. Licensed practical nurses may perform patient management tasks, including telephone follow-up and triage. Medical assistants may extend the work of physicians or other physician extenders. These health professionals have varying levels of training, and their roles vary based on where they work.

Bariatric Surgery Centers of Excellence—The Surgical Review Corporation (SRC), in collaboration with the American Society for Metabolic and Bariatric Surgery (ASMBS), has created a program to highlight surgery centers that deliver excellent care. The ASMBS Bariatric Surgery Center of Excellence® (BSCOE) designation helps identify centers where patients can expect to receive safer and more effective surgical treatment.

Mental Health Care Workers—The role of mental health care workers is to counsel patients, with an emphasis on cognitive behavioral therapy and acceptance commitment therapy. An array



of professionals may provide mental health care: psychiatrists, clinical psychologists (clinical psychology PhD or PsyD), licensed clinical social workers (LCSWs), psychiatric clinical nurse practitioners, or

licensed counselors with a master's degree in counseling. Psychiatrists or psychiatric clinical nurse practitioners may be required for prescription medication management. Clinical psychologists are skilled in psychotherapy techniques, psychoanalysis, behavioral therapy, family therapy, cognitive retraining, biofeedback, and social learning. All social workers can provide brief counseling interventions to address social needs, and LCSWs can provide general mental health counseling and crisis intervention, with particular expertise in problem solving and identification of support services. There are also opportunities for online or in-app cognitive behavioral therapy.

Physical and Occupational Therapists—

Physical and occupational therapists can help you be more physically active and fit by teaching you to exercise in pain-free and fun ways. They will work with you to design a treatment program specific to your needs, with exercises you can do at home. If you have bariatric surgery, your physical therapist will help you prepare for and recover from surgery with a specially designed treatment plan to help you minimize pain, regain motion and strength, and return to normal activities in the speediest manner possible after surgery.

Pharmacists—Your pharmacist's role is to review the medicine you currently take and advise and counsel you. Pharmacists can assist with identifying medication resources, advise on the most cost-effective options, instruct you on the use and proper dosage of medicine, and recommend dosage adjustments if needed. They can also help identify expected adverse effects and interactions with other medications you take.



Dietitians/ Nutritionists—

Dietitians provide nutritional counseling for weight loss and can help you choose which diet plan will work best for your lifestyle and personal preferences.



Social Workers and Social Supports—Examples of social supports include social workers, support groups, and community groups. Social workers can often help you and your family shape your home environment to better support healthy behaviors and habits. They can also help with things like short-term mental health counseling; access to community resources, including financial assistance; medication assistance programs; insurance applications; transportation; and coordination of care.

Your Family and Friends—Yes, they count as part of your care team! Your family and friends will provide critical support as you move through your weight-loss journey. They can help support you by keeping healthy foods in the house, following a nutritious diet with you, making healthy choices when eating out, motivating you to exercise together, and more.



Supported by an educational grant from Novo Nordisk Inc.

