

Weight loss surgery, also known as bariatric surgery, is the most effective and long-lasting treatment for moderate to severe obesity.

What is weight loss surgery?

These procedures make surgical changes to your stomach and digestive system. They limit how much food you can eat, which leads to weight loss. Weight loss surgery is usually an option if you have not been able to lose weight through lifestyle changes and medication alone.

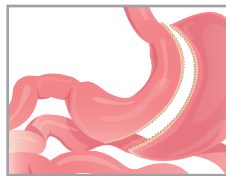
Weight loss surgery can also help manage and prevent chronic medical conditions associated with obesity, like:

- Diabetes
- Hypertension
- Hyperlipidemia
- Obstructive sleep apnea
- Fatty liver disease
- Osteoarthritis
- Cancer

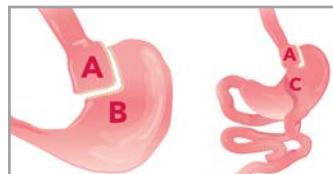
What are the different kinds of weight loss surgery?

There are three common surgical procedures for weight loss:

- **Sleeve gastrectomy**–This is the most common surgical procedure for weight loss. It works by removing around 75% of your stomach. It is a laparoscopic (minimally invasive) procedure.



- **Roux-en-Y gastric bypass**–This is the second most common procedure. It reduces the size of your upper stomach to a small pouch about the size of an egg. It is done by stapling off the upper portion of the stomach and attaching this pouch directly to a part of the small intestine called the Roux limb. It is also a laparoscopic procedure.



A (Upper Stomach Pouch)
B (Lower Stomach)
C (Roux Limb)

- **Gastric band**–This quick, minimally invasive and reversible procedure is now rarely offered. It works by placing an inflatable band around the top of the stomach so that it holds less food. It offers less weight loss than other procedures, and the band often requires adjustment.

What are the benefits of surgery?

The benefits of weight loss surgery include:

- Improvement in obesity-related medical conditions
- Significant weight loss (65%–75% of excess weight)



“I was able to stop using insulin to treat my diabetes after surgery.”

What are the risks of surgery?

Early risks that can occur within the first 30 days after surgery include:

- Anastomotic leak (a leak around the surgery area)
- Nausea
- Vomiting
- Bleeding
- Infection
- Death

Late risks that can occur after the first month of surgery include:

- Nutritional deficiencies
- Obstruction
- Gallstones

Am I eligible for weight loss surgery?

Before you can qualify for weight loss surgery, you need to show that you have tried diet and lifestyle changes to lose weight first. You also need to have tried taking prescription medicine to lose weight without success.

Generally, to qualify for weight loss surgery, you need to have:

- A body mass index (BMI) greater than 40 kg/m², or
- A BMI greater than 35 kg/m² with a linked medical condition (for example, diabetes or hypertension)

However, you may also be eligible at lower BMIs if you have other obesity-related complications that you have not been able to control despite a healthy lifestyle and medication.

Patients of Asian descent have different BMI thresholds for obesity. If you are curious about weight loss surgery, talk to your doctor about the individual criteria you would need to meet to qualify.

What else should I know about weight loss surgery?

Before you can be approved for weight loss surgery, you will have an evaluation by a team of doctors, dietitians, psychologists, and surgeons to make sure it is appropriate for you. You can meet with this team to learn more about your options without any obligation to have a procedure. It is essential that you be medically and psychologically ready to undergo this life-altering surgery, with a clear understanding of the benefits and risks of surgery. Your weight loss team will continue to work with you even after the surgery is over.



It is important that you only move forward with weight loss surgery at a time in your life when you are able to commit to:

- A sustained diet and exercise plan
- Lifestyle counseling to help you cope with changes in diet and exercise
- Psychological counseling and screening for depression
- Quitting smoking, taking drugs, and drinking alcohol
- In some cases, you may be required to lose weight before proceeding with surgery

What do I need to do after surgery?

You will have special dietary requirements to follow after surgery. You will also need to take vitamin supplements, including a daily multivitamin, for the rest of your life following surgery.



You will need lifelong follow-up after weight loss surgery, including regular visits for the first 18 months after surgery. These visits are necessary to monitor you for any complications, ongoing weight loss, nutritional support, and depression screening.

Questions for my doctor:

- Is weight loss surgery right for me?
- Do I meet the criteria for surgery?
- Which surgery is right for me?
- Will insurance cover the cost of weight loss surgery?
- Can I become pregnant following surgery?
- Could I gain weight back after surgery?

For more information, visit:

Medline Plus: medlineplus.gov/weightlosssurgery.html