



Adolescent Weight-Loss (Bariatric) Surgery Program

Important Questions and Answers about Weight-Loss Surgery at Connecticut Children's Medical Center

ISN'T WEIGHT-LOSS SURGERY FOR ADULTS WHO ARE REALLY, REALLY OVERWEIGHT?

Surgery can be a good option for adults and for teens who are at least 14 years old and who have a BMI (body mass index) of over 35, which for most people means being more than 50 pounds heavier than healthy weight for their height.

Weight-loss surgery can also be appropriate for people who have tried all kinds of options but continue to struggle with losing weight or keeping it off. Many of our patients who said they never felt full have found that surgery allows them to feel satisfied.

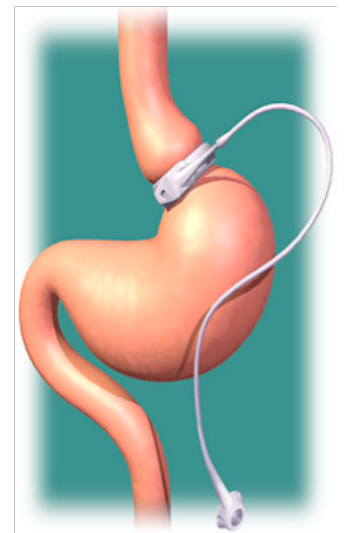
WHAT IS SURGERY LIKE?

Connecticut Children's Medical Center performs two kinds of weight-loss surgery. The first is laparoscopic adjustable gastric banding, which is often simply called "gastric banding." The word "laparoscopic" means that the surgeon makes only very small incisions and uses a fiber-optic camera to see and work inside your body. This helps eliminate pain after surgery and allows you to heal more quickly. Here's what it looks like:

During gastric banding, a band, similar to a belt, is

placed around the upper part of your stomach to create a smaller section of stomach which is like a little pouch. When you eat, food fills the small pouch so that you feel full sooner. As your body adjusts, the band can be tightened to help you continue to lose weight.

Adjusting the band involves inserting saline (a harmless liquid) into the band through a port (a small entryway) that lays under your skin. Don't worry, you can't see it or feel it. This liquid goes through the port, and then through a tube into the band and causes the band to get tighter. As the band gets tighter, the amount of food you need to feel full gets smaller. We use a needle to inject the saline through your skin and into the port, but we numb the area first, and most teens don't feel a thing.



The second surgery we perform is called laparoscopic sleeve gastrectomy, or gastric sleeve surgery (as opposed to gastric banding surgery, which is described above). During gastric sleeve surgery, the surgeon actually removes about 75 percent of your stomach. This surgery works by



giving you a smaller stomach so that less food makes you feel full. Because this surgery is more intense, we typically only use it for teens who have a BMI of more than 50.

After either procedure, life really changes. Healthy eating will become more important than ever because your body will be getting less food but will continue to have the same nutritional needs. Exercise will also be key. It will work like a battery to provide extra power to your surgery for maximum weight loss. Finally, we'll want you to pay attention to your mood and sleep patterns. These are important to your weight-loss success.

WHO ARE THE PEOPLE ON MY MEDICAL TEAM?

- The SURGEON will meet with your family to discuss whether surgery is a good option for you. If you do go forward, the surgeon will perform the procedure, adjust your band and make sure that your body is responding well.
- The PEDIATRICIAN & ENDOCRINOLOGIST will do an evaluation to identify any medical problems that you may have. The evaluation will include a full history, physical exam, blood tests and x-rays as needed.
- The PSYCHOLOGIST will meet with you before and after surgery. They will work with you and your family to

make sure you are in the best emotional place possible to have surgery and are ready for life after surgery.

- The DIETITIAN will work with you and your family to take a look at your current eating patterns, determine what changes need to be made and guide your family through the new eating habits that will be so important after surgery.
- The PHYSICAL THERAPIST will explore physical challenges that you may be facing and provide treatments and activities in a fun and motivating environment.

CAN I MEET OTHER TEENAGERS WHO HAVE HAD WEIGHT-LOSS SURGERY?

Absolutely! Everyone who plans to have surgery is required to attend our monthly support group meetings. These get-togethers are an opportunity to meet teens who are thinking about having surgery and talk to others who have already gone through it. It's a safe place to ask questions, learn more about the actual surgery, and hear the real deal from peers who are getting used to their new bodies and habits.

WHAT IF I WANT MORE INFORMATION?

If you choose to have surgery to manage weight difficulties, your body will be changed for the rest of your life. This is a decision that should be made slowly and carefully with your family involved. Our program will support you through the decision-making process. Every month we hold an information session where you and your family can learn more about the weight-loss surgery program at Connecticut Children's. Please call our main number at 860.837.6717 or email us at obesity@connecticutchildrens.org to learn about upcoming dates and times.

