

WEIGHT LOSS SURGERY PROGRAM

at Rockwood and Sacred Heart Medical Center

SURGEONS/SPECIALISTS



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What Patients Should Know:

What is obesity?

Despite what we may think as a society, obesity is not simply a result of overeating. For many people, genetics is a factor, and in these cases, dieting and exercise programs alone cannot provide effective long-term weight loss. Obesity can be fatal—or at the very least, have a major impact on one's health quality of life.

According to the National Institute of Health, an increase in body weight of 20 percent or more above desirable creates health hazards. Morbid obesity usually means a person is 100 pounds over "ideal" weight, but a better way of defining obesity is by using the Body Mass Index (BMI).

You can calculate your BMI by dividing your weight in kilograms by your height in meters squared. If your BMI is 40 or higher—or if your BMI is 35 and you have serious health risks such as diabetes or high blood pressure—you are likely a candidate for weight loss surgery.

Is weight loss surgery safe?

Studies confirm that the benefits of bariatric or weight loss surgery far outweigh the risks associated with the procedure. High blood pressure, diabetes and heart disease are among the health conditions greatly reduced or eliminated.

What type of surgery is provided by Rockwood and Sacred Heart?

Our surgeons use a laparoscopic surgery method called Roux-en-Y gastric bypass which uses restriction, and to a small extent, malabsorption techniques to help patients lose weight and improve or resolve health issues. We do laparoscopy because it uses minimal incisions, versus traditional open surgery. Additionally, other realized benefits with laparoscopy have been fewer wound complications, such as infection or hernia, and patients returning more quickly to pre-surgical levels of activity.

Restrictive procedures limit the amount of food a patient can eat. This is accomplished by creating a small stomach pouch which fills quickly, helping a person feel full much sooner. Malabsorptive procedures alter digestion by changing the body's ability to absorb calories and nutrients. The surgery changes the way food travels through the digestive system, rerouting food past a large part of the stomach and a portion of the small intestine.

Roux-en-Y is the most popular bariatric surgery technique, accounting for 75 percent of all weight loss surgical procedures. Surgeons favor this method because of the long-term positive results the majority of patients experience. For example, patients see an average of 77 percent less excess body weight one year after surgery and can maintain 60 percent of the targeted excess weight loss even 10 years after surgery. There are further studies showing significant decreases in the severity of life-threatening conditions such as type 2 diabetes, obstructive sleep apnea and high blood pressure (source: The Journal of the American Medical Association 2004).

ROCKWOOD

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The bariatric surgeons at Rockwood believe the Roux-in-Y procedure's success in resolving or preventing other health care concerns makes it the best option. The weight loss achieved with the procedure is a secondary outcome.

Who is a candidate for surgery?

Generally accepted guidelines from the American Society for Metabolic and Bariatric Surgery and the National Institute of Health recommend surgery for those 18 years of age and older. Younger patients may not be mature enough to make a decision with life-altering consequences or follow through with the required lifestyle changes. Patients must quit smoking 8 weeks prior to surgery. Patients over 65 require very strong clinical indications for surgery and must meet other strict criteria.

How can a surgery be scheduled and how long is the waiting period?

A number of issues affect the wait time until surgery, including approval from your insurance carrier, availability of the surgeon and outcomes of your pre-surgery screening process.

Patients considering weight loss surgery must first attend a 90-minute informational session prior to any consultation to learn more about gastric bypass surgery. The next step is a one-hour initial consultation to complete a comprehensive medical history and discuss diet, exercise, lifestyle changes and financial commitments. The insurance preauthorization process is next (which could take 1 to 6 months).

What is required of patients after surgery to be successful?

Weight loss surgery requires patients to carefully consider the long-term commitment to a healthy lifestyle. A commitment to achieving—and maintaining—a healthy weight through diet and exercise is a major factor for long-term success.

Special dietary guidelines include:

- Progressing from liquid to semisolid foods to solid food over a period of weeks
- Consuming smaller meals and two to three quality protein snacks per day
- No extra foods between meals and scheduled snacks
- No calorie-laden beverages or diet soda between meals
- Consuming 2-3 quarts of water each day

Aerobic exercise is required every day for at least 20-30 minutes. Weight-resistance exercise can be added 3-4 days per week.

How is weight loss surgery paid for?

The medical costs associated with gastric bypass or other weight loss procedures for the morbidly obese are not always covered by insurance. It is your responsibility to contact your insurance carrier to learn what coverage it provides and what you will be obligated to pay for yourself. Preauthorization from your insurance is necessary prior to scheduling the surgery.

Patients also have the option of paying cash for all services associated with the surgery.

ABOUT THE WEIGHT LOSS SURGERY PROGRAM AT ROCKWOOD & SACRED HEART

EXPERIENCE

Rockwood surgeons Andrew Bright, M.D., Mathew Rawlins, M.D., and Jonathan Spitz, M.D., have completed more than 800 gastric bypass procedures/operations since 2000.

EXCELLENCE

In 2006, Rockwood and Sacred Heart surgical care teams underwent extensive site inspections to earn designation as a Center of Excellence by the American Society for Bariatric Surgery and the Surgical Review Corporation.

All aspects of the program's surgical processes were closely examined and data on clinical outcomes were reviewed as part of the inspections. The Center of Excellence designation is limited to programs with demonstrated track records of favorable outcomes in bariatric surgery.



COMPREHENSIVE CARE

Our program provides patients with a comprehensive approach to assessing obesity factors, recommending a weight loss plan and counseling. We'll work closely with your primary care provider to see whether you might benefit from alternatives to surgery first (such as medical and dietary interventions). If indeed you are a candidate for weight loss surgery, we'll provide you with nutritional counseling under the direction of a registered dietitian, support groups where you can receive the emotional and psychological support you need during the transitions you experience as a weight loss surgery patient.