

BARIATRIC SURGERY GUIDE



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HEALTH

Foothills
Weight Loss
Surgeons

Disclaimer:

This information provides a basic overview of the bariatric surgery process and is not a substitute for professional medical advice, diagnosis, or treatment. Please consult with your physician regarding any questions about your specific medical condition.



Why choose bariatric surgery?

Obesity has become a significant national health issue and is quickly approaching tobacco use as the top preventable cause of death in the United States. Morbid obesity is closely correlated with a number of serious conditions including diabetes, heart disease, high blood pressure, and sleep apnea. In many cases, bariatric surgery can help obese patients manage or resolve these comorbid conditions.

The bariatric surgeons of Foothills Weight Loss Surgeons perform weight loss surgery at the Fort Sanders Center for Bariatric Surgery which is accredited as a Comprehensive Center by the Metabolic and Bariatric Surgery Accreditation and Quality Improvement.

Benefits of bariatric surgery:

- Increased life expectancy
- Resolution or improvement of obesity-related health conditions
- Long-term weight loss

The decision to have weight loss surgery should be made only after careful consideration and consultation with an experienced bariatric surgeon or a knowledgeable family physician. A qualified surgeon will answer your questions and explain the details of the procedure, the extent of the recovery period, and the reality of follow-up care that will be required.

Are you a candidate for weight loss surgery?

A BMI above 40 indicates that a person is morbidly obese and may be a candidate for bariatric surgery. Bariatric surgery may also be an option for people with a BMI between 35-40 who also suffer from obesity-related health conditions such as diabetes, sleep apnea, or heart disease. When other medically supervised methods have failed, bariatric surgery offers the best option for long-term weight control for those with clinically severe obesity.

Common conditions related to obesity:

- Diabetes
- Heart disease
- High blood pressure
- High cholesterol
- Sleep apnea
- Joint pain
- Cancer
- Infertility
- And many others

Types of Bariatric Surgery Procedures

Sleeve gastrectomy and gastric bypass are among the most common weight loss surgeries performed in the United States. Duodenal switch and Loop duodenal switch are less commonly performed procedures and are reserved for patients who have a body mass index (BMI) higher than 50. You and your surgeon will discuss which procedure, depending on your health and specific weight loss goals, is most appropriate for you. All bariatric procedures (except the gastric band and gastric balloon) are restrictive, resulting in a smaller stomach, and metabolic, affecting the body's hormones to encourage weight loss.

Laparoscopic Sleeve Gastrectomy

Laparoscopic sleeve gastrectomy is currently used as a bariatric procedure for patients with a body mass index (BMI) greater than 35 kg/m². A patient weighing more than a BMI of 50 or who has diabetes may benefit from either a gastric bypass or duodenal switch.

Laparoscopic sleeve gastrectomy involves surgically removing 85% of the stomach, resulting in a new stomach roughly the size and shape of a banana.

Laparoscopic Roux-en-Y Gastric Bypass

In this procedure, stapling creates a small stomach pouch. The remainder of the stomach is not removed, but separated from the stomach pouch. The outlet from this newly formed pouch empties directly into a portion of the small intestine called the Roux limb. This is done by dividing the small intestine and constructing a connection with the newly formed stomach pouch. The other end is connected into the side of the Roux limb of the intestine creating the "Y" shape.

Duodenal Switch

The Duodenal Switch or Biliopancreatic Diversion (BPD-DS) procedure uses a sleeve gastrectomy combined with an intestinal bypass to induce weight loss. In this procedure 60-70% of the upper part of the stomach is removed, creating a banana-shaped sleeve. The pylorus (the opening from the stomach into the duodenum) stays intact rather than being bypassed.

The small intestine is divided at the duodenum (the first part of the small intestine) and connected to the ileum (the bottom third of the small intestine). The jejunum (the part of the small intestine between the duodenum and ileum) is bypassed.

Food is rerouted into the ileum, bypassing the jejunum. The jejunum (aka biliopancreatic limb) joins the ileum forming a connection in the shape of a "Y". Bile and enzymes that breakdown food and absorb protein and fat pass down the biliopancreatic limb and mix with the food in the ileum which then passes into the colon naturally. This procedure reduces the number of calories and nutrients absorbed, resulting in weight loss.

Pathway to Surgery

Weight loss surgery is not a quick fix or silver bullet. The process leading up to surgery often takes months, and it takes a lifetime commitment to maintain results achieved from surgery.

- **Step One: Attend an [informational seminar](#) in person or view online.** You'll be introduced to surgical weight loss options.
- **Step Two: Verification of insurance benefits.** Foothills office staff will work with your insurance carrier to verify insurance benefits available and requirements for weight loss surgery.
- **Step Three: Initial consultation with surgeon, financial counselor, and patient advocate.**
- **Step Four: Completion of supervised, approved weight-loss plan.** Most insurance providers require documentation evidencing that you have followed a medically supervised weight-loss program for at least six months prior to surgery.
- **Step Five: Nutrition and exercise consultation.** A Fort Sanders Regional dietitian will meet with you to discuss life after bariatric surgery, including changes to your digestive system and nutritional requirements; the use of multiple vitamin and mineral supplements; the importance of protein and adequate fluid intake; and any other concerns you may have. The importance of maintaining an active lifestyle and suggestions for appropriate exercise and fitness routines will also be discussed.
- **Step Six: Psychological evaluation.** Meeting with a psychologist or psychiatrist before weight loss surgery is a requirement of most insurance carriers.
- **Step Seven: Clinical clearance and lab tests.** Prior to surgery, you will complete pre-operative testing which includes meeting with your anesthesiologist and undergoing lab work. You also will have an electrocardiogram (EKG) and/or a chest x-ray (CXR) and will receive general information about what to expect throughout your hospital stay.
- **Step Eight: Insurance authorization.** Once you have met the above requirements, staff will work with your insurance company to obtain authorization for surgery.
- **Step Nine: Pre-operative education.** We will meet with you prior to surgery to provide you with important pre-surgical instructions and to help you better understand what to expect following surgery.

Step Ten: Surgery

You will arrive at the Fort Sanders Center for Bariatric Surgery two hours before your procedure is scheduled. Family members or friends may accompany you. You will begin in a holding room, where an IV will be placed in your arm. There, you will receive pre-operative medications and have a brief consultation with your surgeon.

Once you are in the operating room, you will be transferred from your holding room bed to the operating table, where you will receive anesthesia. Your operating room will be equipped with state-of-the-art technology to monitor all vital signs throughout the procedure. Your anesthesiologist will constantly monitor the appropriate level of anesthesia with a special machine.

Following surgery, you will be taken to the recovery room for continuous monitoring. You will be given medication through an IV for pain control. You also will receive oxygen. Most patients are in recovery for about two hours.

With no complications, you can expect to be in the hospital one night for a laparoscopic sleeve gastrectomy and two nights for a gastric bypass procedure. For the duodenal switch you will be there for at least 2 nights. After being released from the hospital, you remain under our watchful care.

Step Eleven: Follow-up care.

Our team provides comprehensive follow-up care, which is one of the most important factors for weight loss success. We work with you every step of the way through regularly scheduled office visits and three support group meetings per month.

Our behavioral health specialist will work with you to help ensure healthy lifestyle habits, including proper diet and a good exercise program.

Gastric bypass and gastric sleeve patients will visit our offices at intervals of one week, one month, three months, six months, 12 months, 18 months, and then annually.

During office visits, you will receive ongoing medical examinations from your surgeon including routine monitoring of weight loss, nutritional status, and any post-operative problems. You will also receive blood tests and clinical monitoring in specialized labs and ongoing education from your dietician.

Regular, consistent follow-ups with your surgeon are vital to your success and should be maintained for best possible results. Our team offers lifetime patient support.

Support Groups

Studies show that weight loss surgery support groups are instrumental for long-term success. Others who have gone through this journey can help guide you through the changes you will undergo. Regular attendance and involvement in support groups serve as a reminder of the importance of portion control and exercise. You'll learn tips that work for others and how to incorporate them into your life and family. At support group meetings, you'll learn strategies and get advice but, most of all, you'll realize you are not in this alone.

Next Steps

A successful bariatric surgery outcome involves committing to lifelong lifestyle, dietary, and exercise changes necessary to maintain a healthy weight after surgery. If you are ready to start the journey to a healthier you, we encourage you to learn which weight loss surgery option may be most appropriate for you by attending a free bariatric surgery seminar. [Click here to register for an upcoming seminar.](#)

Fort Sanders Center for Bariatric Surgery and Foothills Weight Loss Surgeons are excited to help you transform your life and health!