**Bariatric Surgery FAQ**

**Q: I’m thinking about surgery. How do I get started?**
**A:** The first step is to set up a consultation with a bariatric surgeon. Prior to that consultation a Prevea Health representative will call your insurance company to verify benefits. You also will be required to attend an educational seminar at which you’ll learn more about surgery options, risks and life after surgery.

**Q: What should I expect during my initial consultation?**
**A:** During your consultation the doctor will answer your questions and determine your qualifications for surgery. You will discuss the risks and benefits of surgical weight loss as well as future lifestyle changes. You also will need to be ready to discuss your medical history and weight loss history.

**Q: How much work is really expected for me to make the surgery successful?**
**A:** Bariatric surgery is a lifestyle change, and it is going to take commitment on your part to ensure it’s successful. Once your initial consultation is complete and you are serious about surgery you will be scheduled for a series of tests. This includes a psychological evaluation and health functioning tests to ensure you are physically and mentally fit for surgery. A nutritional consultation also will be scheduled to discuss diet change before and after surgery. You may be expected to lose weight before surgery. If you are a smoker you will be required to quit for life. You will have an EKG and blood tests done prior to surgery. Because your eating habits change after surgery, you will need to change your diet and start to increase your activity prior to surgery.

**Q: What tests will need to be done prior to surgery?**
**A:** To reduce the risk of complications during surgery, your surgeon may require the following tests be complete prior to surgery; upper GI study, sleep study, cardiology evaluation, pulmonology evaluation, endocrinology evaluation, upper endoscopy or an ultrasound of the abdomen. Not all tests will be required for all patients. The tests you undergo will depend on your current state of health.

**Q: Does insurance cover the surgery?**
**A:** Each insurance company is different. If you are considering surgery, you will want to verify with your insurance company that benefits are available to you for gastric bypass or sleeve gastrectomy surgery, and that Prevea is in your network. Prior to your initial consultation, Prevea will call your insurance company to verify benefits as well. After the initial evaluations are complete, Prevea will submit a preauthorization request to your insurance company. This will include your medical history, height, weight, BMI at time of initial consult, psychological evaluation/clearance and medical evaluation/clearance. We may ask you to supply a letter of medical necessity written by your primary care doctor as well.

**Q: How long will it take for my insurance company to approve the surgery?**
**A:** Insurance companies vary on the amount of time it will take to review your information. They will notify Prevea of an approval or denial once the decision is made, and Prevea will notify you.
Q: What if my insurance company doesn’t cover the surgery?
A: If you are denied, you can pay for the surgery out-of-pocket or request a bank loan. Prevea billing representatives can set up a payment plan for you prior to surgery. You also may want to wait for open enrollment to consider changing insurance companies to one that offers the benefit or to see if you can get a bariatric rider applied to your current insurance policy.

Q: Is bariatric surgery safe?
A: Yes. Bariatric surgery does not have any more risk than any other surgery.

Q: What is the risk of complications?
A: Complications as a result of bariatric surgery are rare; however it’s important to know what your risks are. Your doctor will discuss these risks with you during your initial consultation.

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<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Gastric Bypass</th>
<th>Sleeve Gastrectomy</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mortality</td>
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<td>Mortality</td>
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<tr>
<td>All complications</td>
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<td>All complications</td>
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<tr>
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<tr>
<td>Blood clots</td>
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<td>Ulcer</td>
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<tr>
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<tr>
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Q: How much time passes between the consultation and surgery?
A: This will vary for each person; however on average it’s about a six month window. This is to allow time for any medical tests and exams that need to be completed, to meet any weight loss requirements and to ensure that insurance coverage has been approved.

Q: Do I have to take vitamins or supplements for the rest of my life?
A: This depends on the type of surgery you undergo. The laparoscopic gastric bypass (Roux-en-Y gastric bypass) procedure will require you to be on vitamins or supplements for the rest of your life. This is due to intestinal bypass/rerouting that occurs during the surgery. A multivitamin and calcium with Vitamin D also is recommended for patients having the gastric sleeve.
Q: Will I have to go on a diet before I have surgery?
A: It is likely you will need to undergo supervised weight loss prior to surgery, either through diet, exercise or both. This is to get you to your optimal health which will assist with the success of the surgery.

Q: What can I eat after surgery?
A: Because your stomach has been reduced in size, you will need to learn how to eat differently. Protein will be your main food source. You will need to eat 60 grams per day. You will also need to drink 64 oz. of water each day. Your food for the first two weeks following surgery will be pureed. A pureed diet is used to eventually transition into a solid food diet after surgery. This diet is focused on foods that are soft, smooth and easy to swallow. You will then transition to a soft diet, meaning foods that are easy to chew and easy to mash with a fork. Your doctor will then transition you to a diet you will remain on for the rest of your life. The diet details will be discussed with you at various times during the process.

Q: Where will my surgery be performed?
A: Your surgery will occur at HSHS St. Vincent Hospital in Green Bay. The staff at HSHS St. Vincent Hospital is specially trained to care for bariatric patients during all stages of recovery and for life.

Q: How long will I be in the hospital?
A: Most patients are out of the hospital within two days of their surgery.

Q: How long will it take for me to lose the weight after surgery?
A: Most patients will lose most of their weight within a year after surgery. While there may be some additional weight loss after this time, it tends to be slower and less dramatic.

Q: I’m worried I won’t keep the weight off.
A: It’s a valid concern. The more you put into your new lifestyle the more you will get out of it. Most people will regain some of their weight, but don’t let this deter you. The staff at Prevea is here to help guide you through it. Your doctor will monitor you closely with follow-up appointments at various stages of your recovery as well as yearly for the rest of your life. And, we host a bariatric support group that meets monthly, which you may find helpful.

Q: What do I need to avoid after surgery?
A: To ensure the surgery is successful, you need to change some of the lifestyle habits you may have had prior to surgery. If you were a smoker, you can’t smoke for the rest of your life. You need to be careful with alcohol as it is purely liquid calories and the effects of alcohol will be stronger once you have a smaller stomach. You will no longer be able to take aspirin, NSAIDS or Pepto Bismol on a regular basis as they increase your risk of getting ulcers in your stomach. You will no longer be able to gulp liquids as this will fill your small stomach faster and increase the chance of adding air into your stomach.

Q: Can I get pregnant after surgery?
A: Your body needs to adjust to its new diet. Because the weight loss is so drastic and occurs over a short period of time you will need to wait 18 months before becoming pregnant.
Q: Will I need to have plastic surgery after bariatric surgery?
A: Most patients have some loose or sagging skin, but it is often temporary. Your body will change a lot between six and 18 months after surgery. Your individual appearance depends upon several things, including how much weight you lose, your age, your genetics and whether or not you exercise. Generally, loose skin is well-hidden by clothing. Many patients wear compression garments to help with appearance. Some patients will choose to have plastic surgery to remove excess skin. Most surgeons recommend waiting at least 18 months, but you can be evaluated before that. Plastic surgery for removal of excess abdominal and breast skin is often covered by insurance for reasons of moisture, hygiene and rash issues. Arms and other areas may not be covered if they are considered “purely” cosmetic by your insurer.

Q: Can I discontinue some of my medications after surgery?
A: As you lose weight, you may be able to reduce or eliminate the need for many of the medications you take for high blood pressure, heart disease, arthritis, cholesterol and diabetes. If you have a gastric bypass or sleeve gastrectomy, you may even be able to reduce the dosage or discontinue the use of your diabetes medications soon after your procedure.

Q: I see that Prevea doesn’t perform lap band surgery. Why is this?
A: Lap band surgery, while popular many years ago, doesn’t result in the weight loss or improvement in medical problems that the other forms of bariatric surgery have proven to show. In addition, the band can slip and/or erode, requiring another surgery to fix.