



Surgical Weight Loss Program

Is Surgical Weight Loss Right for You?

Weight loss surgery is sometimes the best option for people who are severely obese and cannot lose weight by traditional means or who suffer from serious obesity-related health problems. The surgery promotes weight loss by restricting food intake and, in some operations, interrupting the digestive process. The decision to undergo weight loss surgery cannot be taken lightly. While this procedure can be a tool for life-changing weight loss, it also requires your commitment to permanent lifestyle changes, including maintaining a proper diet and participating in regular exercise.

EMMC's team of experienced surgeons, registered dietitians, specialized nurses, physical therapists, and psychologists can help determine if surgery is the best choice for you. Together, we'll review your medical history, your past experiences with weight loss and gain, and other important factors.

If you can answer yes to the following questions, surgical weight loss at EMMC might be an option for you:

- Are you: 100 or more pounds overweight, with a body mass index greater than or equal to 40; or, 75 pounds overweight with a body mass index of 35-39.9, and other obesity-related health problems?
- Have you tried unsuccessfully to lose weight through a well-balanced diet and exercise?
- Are you 18-65 years old? (66-70 year olds will be considered on a case by case basis.)
- Are you a non-smoker?
- Do you have a strong willingness to lead your weight loss effort by actively participating in long-term follow up and maintenance of a proper diet and regular exercise?

First Steps

Contact your primary care provider: Contacting your primary care provider creates an opportunity to discuss initial concerns, determine your body mass index, and obtain a referral to a surgical weight loss program.

Contact your health insurance provider: You should contact your health insurance provider to confirm weight loss surgery is a covered benefit under your plan. Make sure to ask if there are any specific criteria a surgical weight loss program must achieve in order to qualify under your plan. If your insurance does not cover weight loss surgery, you may consider a program with a self-pay/financing option.

Choose a surgical weight loss program that is right for you: Although there are many options, not all programs offer the same evaluation, surgical options, quality, and post surgery support. The questions on the opposite side of this sheet can be a good starting point when evaluating surgical weight loss programs.



Questions to Ask When Evaluating Surgical Weight Loss Programs

Is your program accredited? Surgical weight loss programs that are accredited meet very high program standards, have established track records on patient safety, and consistently deliver quality care. *EMMC's Surgical Weight Loss Program has achieved the highest level of accreditation with the American College of Surgeons.*

What level of experience does your program offer? Established programs and experienced surgeons offer patients safe, high quality care. All programs you consider should be able to provide current quality data for comparison. *EMMC has been offering surgical weight loss for more than 30 years. Since 2004, we have averaged more than 250 cases each year, double the amount required for an accredited program. Our quality data is available online at www.swlp.emmc.org.*

What types of weight loss surgery do you offer? There are different kinds of weight loss surgery, and each offers its own benefits and challenges. EMMC was the first program in Maine to offer the choice between bypass, banding, and sleeve gastrectomy options. Since 2010, 100% of weight loss surgeries at EMMC have been preformed laparoscopically, resulting in decreased risk of complications and quicker recovery time for our patients. EMMC's Surgical Weight Loss Program is also home to two of only a handful of surgeons in the world who offer robotic assisted weight loss surgery. This allows us to offer laparoscopic surgery, and its benefits, to more of our patients.

What do you offer for pre and post surgery care? Surgical weight loss is so much more than the procedure itself. It's important to find a program that offers a comprehensive, multi-disciplinary approach to weight loss. *EMMC's comprehensive approach begins before patients are even accepted into our program. People interested in our program attend a free educational class where they receive a comprehensive overview of our approach to weight loss surgery. At this time, prospective patients also attend a weight loss surgery support group so they can develop an understanding of life after surgery.*

Before surgery, patients participate in an extensive evaluation to help determine if surgical weight loss is the right choice for them. This evaluation includes meetings with a dietitian, physical therapist, psychologist, surgeon, and other specialists as needed.

We understand that post surgery support is a key to successful weight loss for our patients. We offer our patients frequent follow-up appointments with their surgeon and dietitian, body composition testing and measurement of metabolism, monitoring of lab work to prevent deficiencies, free use of our rehab gym for three months, ongoing free monthly support group meetings, and newsletters for educational and emotional support.

For more information on EMMC's Surgical Weight Loss Program, please call (207) 973-6383, or log on to www.swlp.emmc.org.