

Weight Loss Facts

Is Weight Loss Surgery Right For You?

The reasons for obesity are multiple and complex. Despite conventional wisdom, it is not simply a result of overeating.

Research has shown that in many cases a significant, underlying cause of morbid obesity is genetic. Studies have demonstrated that once the problem is established, efforts such as dieting and exercise programs have a limited ability to provide effective long-term relief.

We used to think of weight gain or loss as only a function of calories ingested and then burned.

Take in more calories than you burn, gain weight; burn more calories than you ingest, lose weight. But now we know the equation isn't that simple.

Obesity researchers now talk about a theory called the "set point," a sort of thermostat in the brain that makes people resistant to either weight gain or loss. If you try to override the set point by drastically cutting your calorie intake, your brain responds by lowering metabolism and slowing activity. You then gain back any weight you lost.

Is Weight Loss Surgery Right for Me?

According to Dr. John Feng of Crystal Springs Surgical Associates, "Bariatric surgery may be the next step for people



who remain severely obese after trying non-surgical approaches, or for people who have an obesity-related disease.” He believes surgery to produce weight loss is a serious undertaking. Anyone thinking about undergoing this type of operation should understand what it involves.

Keep in mind the following questions to ask when considering weight loss surgery. Are you...

- Unlikely to lose weight or keep weight off long-term with non-surgical measures?
- Well informed about the surgical procedure and the effects of treatment?
- Determined to lose weight and improve your health?
- Aware of how your life may change after the operation (adjustment to the side effects of the operation, including the need to chew food well and inability to eat large meals)?
- Aware of the potential for serious complications, dietary restrictions, and occasional failures?
- Committed to lifelong medical follow-up and vitamin/mineral supplementation?

Remember: There are no guarantees for any method, including surgery, to produce and maintain weight loss. Success is possible only with maximum cooperation and commitment to behavioral change and medical follow-up—and this cooperation and commitment must be carried out for the rest of your life.

What is Bariatric Surgery?

Bariatric surgery is a surgical procedure performed for treatment of morbid obesity. Bariatric surgery has existed since the 1960's, having gone through significant evolution from the early days of the jejunoileal or jejunocolic bypass operations and the horizontal gastropasty or original stomach stapling. Other procedures that are no longer performed include the silastic ring vertical gastropasty and the vertical banded gastropasty. Modern day procedures are usually performed by skilled laparoscopic surgeons and include the Vertical/Sleeve Gastrectomy, the LAP-BAND® Adjustable Gastric Band procedure, the transected Roux-en-Y Gastric Bypass and the Duodenal Switch.

All the procedures significantly reduce stomach size. This is accompanied by an altered physiological and psychological response to food. The Vertical/Sleeve Gastrectomy, the LAP-BAND® Adjustable Gastric Band procedure, and the Roux-en-Y Gastric Bypass reduce the size of the stomach well over 90%. The Duodenal Switch also reduces the stomach size but not as much. The Duodenal Switch procedure also decreases the body's ability to absorb fat calories and nutrients to aid in successful weight loss.

When the patient ingests a small amount of food, the patient feels a sensation of fullness. The patient learns quickly that subsequent bites of food must be eaten slowly and carefully to avoid increasing discomfort and sometimes vomiting. In the Duodenal Switch, meals high in fat calories cause significant oily diarrhea and discomfort.

Remember, bariatric surgery is only a tool. The patient must eat the right foods with vitamins and supplements to lose their excess weight in a healthy, nutritional manner with close follow-up. Exercise, drinking plenty of liquids, and support from Dr. Feng, nutritionists and other patients alike are critical in this process. Eating the wrong foods, not taking the recommended vitamins and minerals, and not exercising can lead to multiple problems that can result in an unhealthy, malnourished individual who is still obese.

Qualifying for Surgery as a Weight Loss Option

Weight loss surgery is not right for everyone. You should take in consideration of all the hard work, lifestyle change and motivation it will take after surgery. Obesity surgery is an effective treatment for morbid obesity, although the pounds do not come off by themselves. The surgery is an aid to help achieve lasting results by limiting your food intake.

Weight loss surgery is more than the surgery itself. There is an extensive qualification process and life long commitment to the lifestyle changes after the surgery. Crystal Springs Surgical Associates provide a comprehensive program that surrounds the surgery and provides the highest level of pre- and post-surgical care.

The Importance of Support from Friends and Family

The changes in your diet and lifestyle after surgery will last a lifetime. And you'll have a greater chance of long-term success if you surround yourself with people who understand and support your goals.

Things you can do:

Help your friends and family members understand why you've chosen a surgical solution. Many people are under the impression that weight loss surgery is an experimental treatment rather than one with more than 40 years of history. Direct them to Crystal Springs Surgical Associates' web site (www.crystalsurgical.com) to learn as much as they can about the treatment of obesity. It's important that they understand that morbid obesity is a disease and that diets don't work for you.

People who are morbidly obese often report that their spouses, or others close to them, seem to discourage weight loss. These people see your weight as part of your identity. Understand that this is a fear of change. Discuss your reasons for having surgery. They need to know that your health is at stake and you will be counting on them to help you during and after surgery.

Attend support groups in your area or visit them online. Dr. Feng's office will help you here. Surround yourself with people who share your situation. Ask questions and receive answers in a supportive environment. Form a network to share recipes and exercise tips. It's important for you to know that you are not alone. There are knowledgeable, friendly people available to support and help you.



About Crystal Springs Surgical Associates

Crystal Springs Surgical Associates was established in November 2006 after its founder John Feng, MD spent four years with Laparoscopic Associates of San Francisco. Dr. Feng's specialty interests include Laparoscopic Surgery for Morbid Obesity, and a variety of Advanced Laparoscopic Gastrointestinal Surgery for the treatment of many diseases. A highly trained expert in Laparoscopic, or Minimally Invasive Surgery, Dr. Feng has developed many areas of expertise in his practice and authored numerous articles on many of these subjects.