



Is Weight Loss Surgery Right for You?

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Explore your options

To learn more about bariatric surgery or to schedule a consultation, visit sghs.org/bariatrics or call **855-ASK-SGHS (855-275-7447)**.

Are you one of the millions of Americans whose health is negatively impacted by their weight? Have you found that diets and exercise just don't result in significant weight loss? It may be time to consider bariatric surgery, also called weight loss surgery.

For many people, bariatric surgery is the most effective way to lose a lot of weight — and keep it off — to transform the body and, most importantly, restore good health. "That's essential," says J. William Tsai, M.D. "Excess weight increases your risk of type 2 diabetes, heart disease, some cancers, stroke and other health conditions."

A board-certified surgeon at Southeast Georgia Physician Associates—Glynn General & Vascular Surgery, Dr. Tsai has performed several hundred bariatric surgeries.

What bariatric surgery is best?

Most people get one of two types of bariatric surgery — gastric bypass or gastric sleeve.

Gastric bypass, which creates a new pouch and reroutes the small intestine, is a well-known form of bariatric surgery. Patients commonly lose slightly more weight with gastric bypass; however, side effects like cramps, diarrhea and nutritional deficiencies are more common.

During a **gastric sleeve procedure**, also called a sleeve gastrectomy, the surgeon laparoscopically removes part of the stomach and forms the remaining section into a tubelike structure. The new stomach is two-thirds the size of a can of soda.

The gastric sleeve has quickly become the most common weight loss surgery in the United States because it provides the opportunity for significant weight loss without the nutritional deficiencies related to gastric



Do I qualify?

You may be a candidate for weight loss surgery if you:

- Are 18 or older
- Have tried without success to lose weight and keep it off in the past
- Have a body mass index (BMI) of 40 or higher, or you have a BMI of 35 or higher, plus one or more obesity-related health problems
- Are a nonsmoker, or you plan to quit

bypass. According to Dr. Tsai, “More than 90 percent of bariatric patients at Southeast Georgia Health System choose gastric sleeve surgery.”

Both surgeries work by reducing stomach size and decreasing appetite, and both can be performed laparoscopically with safe, minimally invasive techniques. Best of all, research shows that both types of surgery can improve — and in many cases cure — obesity-related health issues such as type 2 diabetes. Taking your health and weight loss goals into consideration, your bariatric surgeon will help you understand your surgical options.

What happens next?

The surgery itself is only one part of a patient’s bariatric treatment plan. Patients must also be willing to make necessary lifestyle changes, such as healthy food choices and exercise.

“Regardless of which type of bariatric surgery you choose, the availability of a support program is crucial to your success,” explains Dr. Tsai. “At Southeast Georgia Health System, our Bariatric Care team hosts a monthly bariatric support group meeting where a behavioral health specialist encourages patients to share their surgical experiences and form supportive relationships with each other. The facilitator also brings in other health specialists, such as nutritionists, to talk to the group. We have assigned nutritionists that work with you pre- and post-bariatric surgery. And we also have a caring staff to support your success.”

Surgical expertise close to home and a support program composed of people from your community are two of the elements that make the bariatric program at Southeast Georgia Health System special.

“We’ve seen incredible friendships form through the support group, and those bonds help people stay on track,” Dr. Tsai says.



Bariatric surgery worked for Jim and Iris Gandy. Turn the page to read their story.

