

# The Herald News

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## **FAQs: What's New in Weight Loss Surgery?**

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A conversation with Matthew LeMaitre, MD

### **Q. What are surgical options for weight loss?**

A. Weight loss surgery, also known as bariatrics, includes three types of procedures: gastric bypass surgery, gastric sleeve surgery, and LAP-BAND® surgery.

### **Q. How has weight loss surgery evolved?**

A. Weight loss surgery has come a long way since laparoscopic procedures were introduced in the 1990s. Gastric sleeve surgery, which is becoming the most common procedure, is now a routine surgery. It takes approximately 45 minutes, is often done in a community hospital, and typically requires a one-night hospital stay. Patients are back to most activities within a week.

### **Q. What can a person undergoing weight loss surgery expect?**

A. Weight loss after surgery can be very rapid. The average can be about four to six pounds of weight loss per week in the first few months, with patients losing as many as 80-120 pounds, depending on their starting weight. More importantly, most can expect swift improvement in their overall health. Many patients are thrilled to no longer need medications to treat diabetes, high blood pressure and high cholesterol as they continue to lose weight.

### **Q. Who is a candidate for weight loss surgery?**

A. There are several criteria for a patient to be a candidate. For some people, we simply use the body mass index (BMI) scale\* to identify if a candidate qualifies. For others, we consider weight-related co-morbidities.

### **Q. Why is BMI important, and what are weight-related co-morbidities?**

A. We now know that many health issues that Americans face are directly due to weight. The BMI helps us measure this and assess risk factors that may affect our health.

Co-morbidities are medical conditions that are caused or made worse by a person's weight. These include common conditions like high blood pressure and high cholesterol that can lead to heart attack and stroke. Others includes diabetes, obstructive sleep apnea, and arthritis.

**Q. We talk about an obesity epidemic in America. How bad is it?**

A. Obesity is one disease that affects nearly every American. Most of us have a family member, friend or colleague with obesity. Statistically, one in three Americans is obese or overweight.

One way to think of obesity is to think of it as malnutrition. Most people associate malnutrition with a lack of food. However, malnutrition means "bad nutrition." In America, we are killing ourselves early with too many calories and the wrong type of calories. It has been reported that this is the first generation of Americans that will not live as long as their parents. Some people feel like it's their fault. The truth is obesity doesn't discriminate. It affects all of us.

**Q. What are ways we can lose weight?**

A. In my opinion, there are four ways to lose weight: diet, exercise, medications, and surgery.

However, many people have spent years dieting and exercising with minimal results and don't even realize that surgery is an option. Now with surgery, in addition to proper diet and continued exercise, their chances of success are greatly improved. You can establish the right combination with guidance from your physician.

**Q. If I'm considering weight loss surgery, how can I get started?**

A. Learn more by attending an informational session or requesting an initial consultation with a weight loss surgeon. During a one-on-one visit, questions and concerns regarding weight loss surgery are discussed in depth. A complete history

and physical are performed to ensure that weight loss surgery is a safe and appropriate option for successful weight loss. All lab and other tests are done locally.

Learn more about weight loss surgery at Saint Anne's Hospital

Weight loss informational sessions, bariatric surgery and related clinical services, and support groups are provided at Saint Anne's. Upcoming informational sessions at Saint Anne's Hospital are scheduled for February 7 and March 7, 5-6 pm, in Room 136 (Suite 2), Clemence Hall. To learn more or pre-register, call 508-689-3944, email [SAHRSVP@Steward.org](mailto:SAHRSVP@Steward.org), or visit [saintanneshospital.org/calendar](http://saintanneshospital.org/calendar).

About Dr. Matthew LeMaitre

A graduate of Tufts University School of Medicine, Dr. LeMaitre completed his residency in general surgery at the University of Massachusetts Medical Center and a fellowship in surgery at Hackensack University Medical Center, New Jersey. A member of Steward Medical Group, Dr. LeMaitre has performed bariatric surgery for more than 10 years, including at St. Elizabeth's Medical Center's nationally recognized Center for Weight Control in Boston. He now maintains local offices in Fall River and Dartmouth and performs weight loss surgery at Saint Anne's Hospital.

\*To calculate body mass index, visit

[https://www.nhlbi.nih.gov/health/educational/lose\\_wt/BMI/bmicalc.htm](https://www.nhlbi.nih.gov/health/educational/lose_wt/BMI/bmicalc.htm)



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