

Weight-Loss Surgery May Improve Diabetes

Losing weight is key in the fight against type 2 diabetes – and now there is evidence that suggests weight-loss surgery (also called bariatric surgery) may help reverse type 2 diabetes. A recent study published in *The New England Journal of Medicine* compared the blood glucose levels of obese people with uncontrolled type 2 diabetes in three treatment groups:

1. Patients who had gastric bypass (a type of weight-loss surgery) and medical therapy (including lifestyle counseling, weight management, blood glucose monitoring and medication).
2. Patients who had sleeve gastrectomy (a type of weight-loss surgery) and medical therapy.
3. Patients who received medical therapy alone.

After one year, patients in the weight-loss surgery groups were far more successful in controlling blood sugar and reducing or eliminating the need for insulin than patients who had medical therapy alone. Some patients experienced a return to normal blood sugar levels shortly after surgery – *before* any significant weight loss occurred. This suggests that stomach-reducing surgery could play a role in helping the body control blood sugar on its own.

How Losing Weight Helps Fight Diabetes

Losing weight and exercising more may help control blood sugar levels and reduce the amount of diabetes medication you take. Here's how it works: Excess weight makes it harder for your body to process the sugars in your system. After losing weight, your body may be able to use its own insulin to control blood sugar levels more effectively.

According to Bruce Bodner, MD, Bariatric surgeon at Morton Hospital, weight loss can also have many additional benefits. “Other benefits include lower blood pressure, less wear and tear on the knees and hips, a reduced risk of future heart attack, and even a lower risk of developing cancer in both men and women,” says Bodner.

Surgical Options for Weight Loss

Losing any amount of weight can help - even just five percent of your body weight. Some people achieve dramatic weight loss through diet and exercise, but others need more help to reach their weight loss goals. People with diabetes in particular may struggle to lose weight because some diabetes medications may contribute to weight gain.

Weight-loss surgery is often considered a last resort after other attempts to lose weight have failed or fallen short. Now with more evidence suggesting that bariatric surgery may help reverse diabetes, weight-loss surgery may be considered earlier as a treatment option for obese patients with type 2 diabetes.

Weight-loss surgery involves reducing the size of the stomach or redirecting part of the lower intestine, or both. The surgery requires a lifelong change in diet and exercise habits in order to lose weight and keep it off. Types of weight-loss surgery include:

- Gastric bypass – the upper portion of the stomach is surgically stapled to separate it from the rest of the stomach, changing the path food takes so it bypasses much of the stomach and part of the small intestine.
- Sleeve gastrectomy (also known as Gastric Sleeve) – part of the stomach is removed to create a smaller stomach in the shape of a long tube.
- Laparoscopic gastric banding (known as LAP-BAND®) – a band is cinched over the upper part of the stomach to separate it from the lower portion.

“If someone is close to being morbidly obese, I would recommend diet and exercise, avoiding carbohydrates like soda, potatoes, bread, pasta, and sticking to protein, vegetables and fruit,” says Bodner. “Weight loss surgery is not simple or trivial; however, those who have a body mass index over 40 - especially if they are diabetic – and have failed real attempts at diet and exercise should certainly consider it.”

The Centers for Weight Control at Morton Hospital

People who are overweight or obese and dealing with uncontrolled diabetes face serious health risks, including heart disease, strokes, kidney failure, blindness, amputations and other complications. Losing weight can help reduce some of these health risks by lowering blood pressure, cholesterol levels and blood glucose levels.

Our weight loss centers include a multidisciplinary team of surgeons, nutritionists and psychologists dedicated to working with you before and after your surgery and helping you maintain a healthy lifestyle.

Morton Hospital Center for Weight Control
88 Washington Street
Taunton, MA 02780
Offering Gastric Sleeve Weight Loss Surgery
Bariatric Surgeon: Bruce Bodner, MD

Learn more and attend our online weight loss seminar by visiting www.steward.org/Weight-Loss-Centers