



Good Samaritan Hospital  
Weight Management Center

**Step-by-Step Guide to Weight Loss Surgery**

Undergoing weight loss surgery is a process that requires 100 percent dedication from the patient. Outlined here are the steps you will need to take on your road to surgery.

1. Attend a seminar
2. Schedule an appointment
3. Meet requirements
4. Submit information to insurance
5. Schedule surgery
6. Undergo surgery
7. Life after surgery

**Step one: Attend an educational weight loss surgery seminar or view DVD/online seminar.**

This two-hour seminar is provided regularly by the bariatric care team including the surgeon, dietitian, exercise physiologist and bariatric coordinators. You will have the opportunity to get detailed information about bariatric surgery and ask any questions you may have.

**Step two: Schedule an appointment for a surgical evaluation with Dr. Kerlakian.**

For this appointment:

- You will need to arrive with the necessary forms completed (diet history, weight loss history, medication list, medical/surgical history, and program fee contract).
- Your past medical history, surgical history and current medications will be reviewed at this appointment.

- You may be asked to have other medical evaluations performed before a surgery date is scheduled, such as pulmonary or cardiology evaluations.
- Your weight and BMI will be taken. You will be expected to not gain significant weight from this point up through your surgery.

Don't be afraid to ask Dr. Kerlakian questions during this appointment. Receiving answers to the following questions may help you decide if weight loss surgery is right for you:

- What types of weight loss surgery procedures have you performed?
- How many of each procedure have you performed?
- Can this surgery be performed using minimally invasive techniques?
- Can I be considered a candidate for surgery even though I have one or more associated health conditions related to my obesity?
- Which procedure is best for me? Why? What are the risks involved?
- How long will I be in surgery?
- What is the length of my anticipated hospital stay?
- How long will it be before I can return to pre-surgery levels of activity?
- How will my eating habits change?
- Do you have information about surgery costs and payment options?
- What is the typical excess weight loss and improvement of associated health conditions for your other patients?
- Do you have patients who are willing to share their experiences, both positive and negative?
- What information can you give me to help family and friends better understand this surgery?
- What type of long-term, after-care services (such as support groups and counseling) can you provide for me?
- What do you expect from me if I decide to choose a surgical solution?

Once identified as a surgical candidate at this appointment, arrangements need to be made to pay the \$500 program fee.

### **Step three: Meet requirements for surgery approval.**

To be approved for weight loss surgery, you will be required to:

- Attend a nutritional evaluation/class to learn about your dietary requirements following surgery
- Attend a physical assessment and exercise class to obtain an understanding of the importance of exercise following surgery.

- Undergo a psychological evaluation and have any identified significant problems treated before surgery. Many insurance companies and our program require this evaluation to ensure quality outcomes.

As a result of the evaluations, it may be recommended that you participate in pre-operative educational counseling, behavior modification counseling, psychotherapy, and/or psychiatric treatment before being considered a surgical candidate.

**Step four: Submit information to insurance provider.**

We submit your insurance information to your insurance provider. Many people ask how long it will take to schedule for surgery once we have begun the insurance approval process. Remember that providers are different in their approval process. It could take several days to get approval, but may take several weeks before the process is completed. Once you are approved, our surgery scheduling staff will contact you to schedule your surgery.

**Step five: Schedule surgery.**

After we receive your insurance approval, your surgery date will be scheduled. Once your surgery date is scheduled, you will need to schedule the following appointments:

- Surgery education visit with the nurse
- Pre-surgical office visit with Dr. Kerlakian to sign your surgery consent (a family member or support person must be present to witness the signing of your surgery consent)
- Nutrition education visit with the dietitian

These appointments will allow you to gather more information and be better prepared for your hospitalization, dietary changes you will be encountering after surgery and will help you transition into the necessary lifestyle changes you will be implementing. There may be an opportunity to schedule these visits on the same day(s), in order to better maximize your time.

**Step six: Undergo surgery.**

Following the completion of the previous steps, you will have weight loss surgery. Hand assisted laparoscopic gastric bypass takes about 1.5 hours, with an average hospital stay of two to three days, and laparoscopic gastric banding takes about one hour, with an average hospital stay of one day.

Immediately following your surgery you will begin a clear liquid diet. You will have your first post-surgical office follow-up about two weeks after your surgery date. At this time you will meet with Dr. Kerlakian, a nurse and the dietitian to address any post-surgical concerns.

**Step seven: Life after surgery.**

You will be required to attend long-term office follow-up visits in our program to track your post-surgical and behavior modification progress. Standard follow-up office visits are typically scheduled as follows \*:

- 2 weeks – surgeon, bariatric coordinator, and dietitian
- 4 weeks – primary care physician
- 5 to 6 weeks – begin post surgery exercise program at TriHealth Fitness & Health Pavilion
- 6 weeks – surgeon, bariatric coordinator, and dietitian
- 12 weeks – blood work
- 4 to 6 months – dietitian
- 6 months – surgeon, bariatric coordinator, and blood work
- 6 to 9 months – dietitian
- 1 year – surgeon, bariatric coordinator, and blood work
- Annual follow-up with surgeon for 5 years and annual blood work for the rest of your life

It is recommended that you follow up for behavioral health counseling with the mental health provider after surgery. This can help you develop strategies to make and maintain the necessary lifestyle changes after weight loss surgery.

It is also recommended that you attend our support group meetings as much as possible before and after your surgery. Find a support group meeting to attend.

\* Lap-Band® patients will require more frequent follow-up visits for band adjustments. The visits will vary from patient to patient, averaging 10 visits in the first year and annually thereafter.