

Questions to Ask Your Surgeon

Choosing the right bariatric surgeon may be the most important decision you make. The surgeon who performs your gastric band, gastric bypass, or sleeve gastrectomy procedure will also be a part of your support team for years to come. So it's important for you to feel at ease with him or her. The staff at your surgeon's bariatric office will also be an important part of your support team.

Your goal is to make sure that you feel well supported by the entire bariatric practice right from the start. Take the time to look for a well-qualified bariatric surgery practice and to ask all of your questions of the surgeon and staff.

Here are some questions to get started.

Surgeon credentials and experience

- Are you board certified?
- What other certifications or professional memberships do you have?
- Do you perform the majority of your procedures through open surgery or using a laparoscopic technique?
- What types of bariatric surgery procedures do you perform?
- How many of each bariatric procedure have you performed?
- What is your mortality rate? Is it greater or less than the national average?
- What surgery complications do you come across most often?
- Is your rate of complications greater or less than the national averages?
- Does your program use established guidelines for patient selection?
- 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?

About the procedures

- Which bariatric procedure is best for me? Why? What are the risks involved?
- If I decide to have bariatric surgery, what will you expect of me?
- How long will I be in surgery?
- How long will I be in hospital?



Life after surgery

- How long after surgery can I return to normal activity levels?
- How will my eating habits change?
- What can I eat as part of a post-bariatric surgery diet?
- What is the typical weight loss for your patients?
- What is the typical improvement of other health conditions (such as joint pain or type 2 diabetes) for your patients?

Financing

- Do you have information about bariatric surgery costs and payment options?
- Will you work with me to secure insurance approval?
- Do you have an insurance expert on your team who can assist me with the insurance approval process?
- If I am denied coverage by my insurance company, do you offer any financing options?

Bariatric practice services and support

- Does your practice offer evaluation and treatment for obesity-related co-morbid conditions, such as type 2 diabetes and sleep apnea?
- Is there a dedicated facility and staff for my care? If yes, does this include a dedicated nursing staff and nurse practitioners?
- Does your practice have the Bariatric Surgery Center of excellence designation?
- Does your practice offer support services for psychological needs?
- Does your practice offer registered dietitians?
- Are the radiologists and anesthesiologists in the practice board certified?
- Will you work with my primary care physicians to ensure total wellness?
- Can you or a member of your practice perform reconstructive surgery after my weight loss? If not, can you recommend a surgeon?
- Do you offer accommodations and travel assistance for out-of-town patients?
- Does your practice offer translation services for non-English-speaking patients?
- Does your practice provide access to support groups following surgery?