

## WLS Frequently Asked Questions

### **What types of Weight Loss Surgeries are offered at the Nova Scotia Health Authority (NSHA) in Halifax?**

Laparoscopic Sleeve Gastrectomy is the weight loss surgery being performed at the NSH.

### **What is Sleeve Gastrectomy?**

Sleeve Gastrectomy is a procedure whereby 80% of the stomach is removed leaving a small, sleeve (like a shirt sleeve) shaped stomach.

### **Is Sleeve Gastrectomy reversible?**

No. It is irreversible.

### **Do you do Bypass surgeries or Banding/Lap Band?**

Not usually. Sleeve Gastrectomy happens for 90% of our patients.

### **If I have had weight loss surgery in the past—can I be referred to NSH to have this surgery?**

No. At this point we are only seeing patients who have not had previous weight loss surgeries.

### **How does Sleeve Gastrectomy work?**

80% of the stomach is removed. With the smaller stomach, you feel full faster after eating a small amount of food. In addition, many of the hormones which stimulate hunger are removed with the surgery resulting in fewer cravings and feelings of hunger. The surgery is only a weight loss tool; the real work involves lifelong commitment to healthy eating, exercise and behavior changes which will support weight loss and healthy weight.

### **Is there a charge?**

No. If patients meet the MSI approved criteria-MSI covers the costs of surgery.

### **What is the process for being referred for surgery?**

See your Family Doctor/Nurse Practitioner. Family Doctors and Nurse Practitioners will then send off a consult. The process is outlined on our Halifax Obesity Network website under the eLearning Preparation for Bariatric Surgery tab.

## **What is the Fax number that healthcare teams can use to contact you?**

Fax (902) 425-8292

## **How do I know that my consult has been sent/received?**

Do not call. Patients can check with their family physicians' offices to determine if consults have been received

## **Who are appropriate patients for weight loss surgery?**

Those challenged with the following:

BMI >40

BMI>35 with accompanying chronic disease (for example Type 2 diabetes, high blood pressure, high cholesterol)

Failure of medical management over a long period of time to control weight

Hypertension or obesity related cardiomyopathy

Abnormal Glucose Tolerance or Type 2 diabetes

Reflux Esophagitis

Severe sleep apnea

Disabling arthritis, chronic low back pain, osteoarthritis, impending knee replacement surgery candidate

Breakdown of skin secondary to excess pannus with ongoing cellulitis or recurrent abscess

End stage obesity syndrome requiring hospitalization

Pseudotumor cerebri

Hyperphagic syndromes

Steatohepatitis and cirrhosis

Hyperlipidemias

Other syndromes

## **How does the process work?**

Go the Halifax Obesity Network website and watch the posted videos and follow eLearning Preparation for Bariatric Surgery posted info.

## **Does anyone get prioritized because they are more unwell than others?**

No. Many people have multiple challenges. Getting seen by the team happens when you have completed the steps posted in the eLearning Preparation for Bariatric Surgery with your GP/NP and they indicate that you are ready to be seen by the Bariatric Surgery Team.

## **How many patients are interested in/have been referred for Weight Loss Surgery at this point?**

More than 2000. Referrals are received from NS and PEI.

**Who are the members of the Obesity/Weight Loss Surgery Team?**

Jenna Crown Dietitian, Dr. Tom Ransom Endocrinologist, Dr. Jim Ellsmere Surgeon, Dr. Richard Spence Surgeon, Dr. Riley Stewart Surgeon, Dr. Tiffany Shepherd Psychologist, and Kara Evers Nurse Practitioner

**If I pay, can I get this done quicker at this program?**

No. This is a publicly funded program.

**What are the youngest and oldest age requirements for weight loss surgery?**

Over age 18 and younger than 65.

**Do people have to eat a particular way post weight loss surgery?**

Yes. Go to the Halifax Obesity Network website and then eLearning Preparation for Bariatric Surgery Program. Under this tab you will see related documents and diets are posted there.

**Do you offer programs for people challenged with obesity not interested or not appropriate for surgery?**

Yes. In the past we offered 2 sessions of “Boot Camps” where a focus was on developing lifestyle skills/behavior modification to help with achieving weight loss. The psychologists on our team also often run behavior modification programs.

**Will you continue your Strides for Obesity annual walk?**

We would like to. Check our website for updates

**If I have weight loss surgery out of province or country will the NSH Halifax Obesity Network Weight Loss Surgery Team follow me?**

No. Not at this point. You should arrange follow up with your surgery team. There are also some GPs and NPs in NS, who are not directly linked to our program, who may follow you.

**What if I have an emergency after surgery (severe pain in my abdomen, dehydration, excessive vomiting)?**

Go to your local emergency department.