

What Is Gastric Sleeve Weight Loss Surgery?

Are you considering gastric sleeve surgery because you've tried diets and exercise for years and still have a lot of weight to lose? You'll want to know the risks and benefits, what makes someone a good candidate for the operation, and what long-term commitments you

need to make to keep the results.

In this operation, surgeons remove part of your stomach and join the remaining portions together to make a new banana-sized stomach or "sleeve." With just a small sack (about 1/10th the size of your original stomach), you'll feel full a lot quicker than you did before. You

won't be able to eat as much as you used to, which helps you lose weight. Plus, the surgery removes the part of your stomach that makes a hormone that boosts your appetite.

It's Different From Gastric Bypass

In gastric bypass, the surgeon makes a small pouch that skips most of

your stomach, going straight to the intestine.

Gastric sleeve surgery is best for people who have a BMI (body mass index) of at least 40. That means you're 100 pounds or more over your ideal weight. Some people are too heavy for gastric bypass surgery, so it may be a good alternative.

What Happens

The surgery takes about an hour. Your surgeon will make a few small cuts in your belly and insert a laparoscope -- an instrument with a tiny camera that sends pictures to a monitor. The surgeon will then insert other medical instruments through the additional cuts and remove 3/4 of your stomach. Finally, they'll reattach the rest of

your stomach to form the "sleeve" or tube.



Considering Weight Loss Surgery?

You might be in the hospital for about 2 or 3 days. The procedure is permanent.

New Eating Habits

The first day after surgery, you'll drink clear liquids. By the time you leave the hospital, you can eat pureed foods and protein shakes and will continue to do so for about 4 weeks.

Keep in mind that you have to change the way you eat forever. After that first month, you'll switch to eating soft solid foods very

slowly. Other pointers to keep in mind:

- Everything must be chewed thoroughly before being swallowed.
- Don't drink while you eat, as this might cause your new stomach to overflow.
- Drink liquids a half-hour after finishing a meal.
- Avoid high-calorie sodas and snacking.

- Take vitamin and mineral supplements every day.

After 2 or 3 months, you can move on to regular meals.

But remember, you will not be able to eat as much as you used to.