



Bariatric/Metabolic Surgery

ONE MORE TOOL TO HELP WITH WEIGHT LOSS

By Amy Swisher

Obesity leads to multiple medical problems: diabetes, hypertension, heart disease, sleep apnea, depression, cancer, and others. Most people who have a BMI (body mass index) of 35 or higher, or who are 100 pounds or more overweight, have tried many times to take the weight off, only to watch it creep right back on.

Diet and exercise are the standard starting points for people who wish to lose weight. This approach can be complemented by support groups, counseling, hypnosis, and meditation. For some who have already tried every route they can think of, or who just can't stay on a diet long enough to make significant progress, there are other alternatives. Surgery has proven to have long term weight loss benefits.

Drs. Satish Muthavarapu and Thampi Ampadi, of Baystate Medical Practices - Greenfield Surgery, are general surgeons with fellowship training in bariatric surgery and are on staff at Baystate Franklin Medical Center. They currently offer laparoscopic adjustable gastric banding (Lap Band) and sleeve gastrectomy—minimally invasive procedures that reduce the size of the stomach.

The surgery generally requires an overnight stay in the hospital.

It works best for people who tend to eat large portions of food

at a sitting, versus those who snack on small amounts throughout the day. The preoperative evaluation, surgery, and follow-ups are covered by most insurance companies.

“This is a valuable tool, not a magic solution,” explains Muthavarapu.

“To be successful with the surgery, patients need to pay attention to the foods they are choosing. The greatest advantage is that they will feel full much more quickly with less food. For those who are used to eating large portions, this is a big shift, and it happens right away.”

Weight loss is significant for those who add exercise to their regimen. “I tell my patients to think of 3,500 calories as equivalent to one pound. If you eat just 500 calories less per day, or exercise enough to burn that much, you will lose one pound a week; if 1,000 calories less per day, two pounds a week.”

Muthavarapu and Ampadi are part of a multidisciplinary team offering support to patients before, during, and after their surgery. The team also includes a psychiatrist, nutritionist, bariatric nurse coordinator, and sports medicine specialist.

“Pulling all of these professionals together helps us surround our patients with the support they need to be successful,” says Muthavarapu. “However people choose to lose weight, the important thing is that they find the tools that work best for them. That's why we're here, to offer one more possible solution for successful weight reduction.”

To learn more about bariatric surgery in the Greenfield area, call Baystate Medical Practices – Greenfield Surgery at 413-773-2626. In the Springfield area, call Baystate General Surgery at 413-794-7020.

Millions of people struggle with their weight, and millions more have simply given up the battle. In fact, there are now 15 million Americans who are considered morbidly obese, based on a calculation of their body mass index.

