

Weight Loss Surgery Candidates

Pre and Post-operative Phone-based Curriculum

Frequently Asked Questions

GENERAL QUESTIONS

What's new about HealthPartners weight loss surgery policy?

Beginning June 1, 2007, surgery candidates must complete a weight loss surgery management course **before** surgery. The course — available free of charge — is titled *A Call to Change...Healthy Lifestyles, Healthy Weight® Weight Loss Surgery Edition*. This course fulfills the requirement for members meeting the qualifying BMI, who were evaluated by the weight loss surgery program and selected for surgery.

Why is this required?

Experts and recent medical studies find that advice and support on diet, physical activity and lifestyle changes — both before and after surgery — is related to greater weight loss success. This program does not replace any visits with your surgeon or staff. It helps prepare you for surgery.

Does everyone who is going to have surgery need to enroll?

Yes. You must complete at least five sessions before surgery and then complete the rest of the course after surgery.

How do I register?

Your surgeon makes a referral to HealthPartners for you. A health professional then calls you to register and schedule your phone sessions.

How long is the course? Do I have to wait for my surgery to complete this program?

The course covers material before your surgery and after your surgery. You need to complete five phone sessions before surgery and four sessions after surgery. The post course phone calls typically begin about two weeks after surgery and the final call takes place approximately nine months after surgery. This phone course is designed to help you change your lifestyle, so in order to gain the most benefit, schedule and complete one session every two weeks (or longer). You'll receive a course handbook, a pedometer, weekly weight chart, food and activity journal, an exercise plan and an action plan designed for you.

What hours are available for these sessions?

You can schedule sessions between 8 a.m. and 7:30 p.m. (Central Time) Monday through Friday.

Are there exceptions?

Yes, if your surgeon indicates one of the following:

- ▶ A serious health condition, such as a transplant, diabetes complication, malignant hypertension, and Pickwickian syndrome
- ▶ A previous weight loss surgery procedure, which is now being redone (revised).

Do I have to pay for the course?

No.

HEALTHPARTNERS PHONE-BASED COURSE QUESTIONS

Tell me about the program.

First, your surgeon's office refers you to the course. Then, a health professional calls you to enroll and schedule your sessions. Each session is conducted over the telephone by a registered dietitian or a health educator. Five phone sessions occur before your surgery. The year following your surgery, you take six more sessions.

How will I benefit by participating in this phone course?

By participating in the phone-based course, you benefit by:

1. Maximizing your success in overall weight loss

This phone course is designed to help you prepare for your surgery in a way that helps you maximize your chances for long-term success. It encourages you to start making behavior changes early — as this is shown to increase your chance of keeping the weight off long-term. In fact, if you start making lifestyle changes early and lose a bit of weight before your surgery (the course encourages 5 percent), research shows this may produce more weight loss after surgery and will probably reduce the overall length of your operation.

The higher your BMI, along with the associated health conditions (i.e. hypertension, diabetes, asthma, etc.) — the higher your surgical risk. BMI and associated health conditions increase the likelihood of pulmonary complications and wound infections. Even relative modest weight loss prior to surgery can result in substantial improvements in pulmonary function, blood glucose control, blood pressure, and mental health.

2. Helping to reduce the potential for surgical complications

Many experts, including the National Institutes of Health, American Dietetic Association and Mayo Clinic recommend a pre-operative weight management program prior to surgery to reduce surgical complications, prepare patients and increase total weight loss.

3. Ensuring you have long-term comprehensive and safe care available

HealthPartners and others find the many changing medical and lifestyle needs following weight loss surgery decrease when using a structured multi-care approach to managing surgical weight loss.

How does my surgeon know I've completed the course?

You will receive a certificate of completion after you finish five sessions before surgery. You can then submit this to your surgeon (if requested).

What if I do not receive the certificate or I lose it?

For certificate of completion, please call 1-800-720-1687.

Do I have to notify HealthPartners that I have completed the course?

No, the only person who needs to know that is your surgeon.

Is HealthPartners course the only program option?

Yes.