



Weight Loss Surgery Candidates Pre and Post-operative Phone-based Curriculum *Frequently Asked Questions*

GENERAL QUESTIONS

What is HealthPartners weight loss surgery policy?

Surgery candidates must complete a weight loss surgery preparation course before surgery. The course — available free of charge — is titled *HealthPartners Weight Loss Surgery Program*. This course fulfills certain medical policy requirements 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 medical studies find that advice and support on diet, physical activity and lifestyle changes — before and after surgery — is related to greater weight loss success. This program does not replace any visits with your surgeon or staff. It supports your preparation for surgery, between clinic appointments.

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

Yes. You must complete at least five sessions before surgery and are strongly encouraged to continue participation post-operatively.

How do I register?

Your surgical team will submit a referral to HealthPartners for you. A health professional will then contact you to register and schedule your phone appointments.

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-appointments before surgery and four appointments after surgery. These appointments are meant to occur during the same period of time that you are completing clinical appointments. As designed, completion of the phone program should not delay the determination of your surgery date. This phone program is designed to support you as you change your lifestyle. In order to gain the most benefit from your calls, we schedule and complete one appointment every two weeks (or longer).

You'll receive a course handbook, a pedometer (step tracker), and a journal to track your food and activity. You'll have the chance to use the resources of our coach experts to design your own 'health action plan'.

The post-operative phone appointments begin about two weeks after surgery. Your final call takes place approximately nine months after surgery.

What hours are available for phone appointments?

You can schedule appointments Monday through Thursday between 7 a.m. and 7:30 p.m., Central Time and Fridays between 7 a.m. and 5:30 p.m., Central Time.

Are there exceptions?

Yes, if your surgeon indicates one of the following:

A serious health condition, such as a transplant, diabetes complication, malignant hypertension or Pickwickian syndrome

Do I have to pay for the course?

No.

HEALTHPARTNERS PHONE-BASED COURSE QUESTIONS

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 weight off long-term. Research has shown that clients who practice healthy bariatric lifestyle changes early and lose some weight, increase the likelihood of more weight loss after surgery.

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 decrease the overall length of your operation.

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?

Your bariatric clinic is able to track your progress from engagement to completion of the phone program through our online referral system.

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

No

Is the HealthPartners course the only program option to meet this requirement?

Yes.