

# Common Questions About Bariatric Surgery

## What is bariatric surgery?

- Bariatric surgery makes your stomach smaller so you feel full after eating less food. This can help people with obesity who have not been able to manage their weight over a long period of time.

## What type of bariatric surgery does Nova Scotia Health offer?

- Nova Scotia Health offers **laparoscopic sleeve gastrectomy** (also called **gastric sleeve resection**).
  - › Laparoscopic means the surgery is done using tools put through small incisions (cuts) in your abdomen (stomach area).
- **We do not offer:**
  - › Roux-en Y gastric bypass surgery
  - › Laparoscopic adjustable gastric band (LAGB) surgery (also called a stomach band or a lap band)
  - › Biliopancreatic diversion
  - › Duodenal switch
  - › Endoscopic sleeve gastroplasty (ESG)

## How does a sleeve gastrectomy work?

- A sleeve gastrectomy removes 80% of your stomach. Your stomach will then be shaped like a shirt sleeve.
- Since your stomach is smaller:
  - › You will feel full after eating less food.
  - › Many of the hormones which stimulate (increase) hunger will have been removed. You will have less cravings and feel less hungry.
- **You will still need to eat healthy foods, be physically active, and change your behaviour.** You will also need medical follow-up for the rest of your life.

## Can a sleeve gastrectomy be reversed?

- **No.**

## Is bariatric surgery right for me?

Bariatric surgery may be right for you if you:

- › Are between 17 and 65 years old
- › Have a BMI between 40 and 60
- › Have a BMI over 35 **and** a chronic (ongoing) disease, like:
  - › High blood pressure
  - › Type 2 diabetes
  - › High cholesterol
  - › Fatty liver disease
  - › Heart disease
  - › Sleep apnea
- › Have a history of obesity over a long period of time
- › Have cardiomyopathy related to high blood pressure or obesity
- › Have abnormal glucose tolerance or type 2 diabetes
- › Have severe (very bad) sleep apnea
- › Have disabling arthritis, chronic low back pain, or osteoarthritis, or you are waiting for knee or hip replacement surgery
- › Have skin breakdown caused by too much abdominal (stomach area) skin with ongoing cellulitis (bacterial skin infection) or abscesses (sores) that keep coming back
- › Have metabolic dysfunction-associated steatotic liver disease (MASLD), steatohepatitis, or cirrhosis
- › Have hyperlipidemia

## If I have had bariatric surgery in the past, can I have it again?

- **No.** We do not treat people who have had bariatric surgery in the past.

## **Do you offer programs for people with obesity who do not want or are not suited for bariatric surgery?**

- No. Ask your primary health care provider (family doctor or nurse practitioner) to refer you to the Obesity Care Clinic in Cape Breton:

Sterling Health Centre

3 Sterling Road

Glace Bay, NS B1A 3X2

› Phone: 902-842-3965

› Fax: 902-842-5142

## **Is there a cost?**

- No. If you and the bariatric surgery team decide that bariatric surgery is right for you, the surgery is paid for by the provincial health insurance plan (MSI).

## **If I pay, can I have surgery sooner?**

- No. Bariatric surgery at Nova Scotia Health is paid for by the government. You cannot pay for it privately.

## **How do I get referred for bariatric surgery?**

- Ask your primary health care provider about referring you.
  - › Fax: 902-425-8292

## **How will I know if my referral has been sent?**

- Ask your primary health care provider if the referral has been sent.
- Please **do not** call the clinic.

## **How long will I have to wait for surgery?**

- You will have an intake appointment with the bariatric surgery team when:
  - › you have finished the Bariatric Surgery eLearning Program.
  - › your primary health care provider decides you are ready.
- People are **not** seen sooner based on medical need.

## Who is on the bariatric surgery team?

- The team includes:
  - › A dietitian
  - › An endocrinologist
  - › A nurse practitioner
  - › Surgeons

## Will I have to change my eating after surgery?

- Yes. For information and nutrition plans, visit:
  - › <https://www.nshealth.ca/documents-and-reports/nova-scotia-health-bariatric-surgery-patient-information>

### What if I have an emergency after my surgery?

- **Go to the nearest Emergency Department or call 911 right away** if you have any of these symptoms:
  - › Severe abdominal (stomach area) pain
  - › Dehydration (not getting enough fluids)
  - › A lot of vomiting (throwing up)

## What if I have bariatric surgery outside of Nova Scotia or Canada?

- We are not able to care for people not enrolled in our program. Arrange for follow-up care from the surgery team who performed your surgery, your primary health care provider, or VirtualCareNS:
  - › [www.nshealth.ca/clinics-programs-and-services/virtualcarens](http://www.nshealth.ca/clinics-programs-and-services/virtualcarens)

This pamphlet is for educational purposes only. It is not intended to replace the advice or professional judgment of a health care provider. The information may not apply to all situations. If you have any questions, please ask your health care provider.

Find all patient education resources here:  
[www.nshealth.ca/patient-education-resources](http://www.nshealth.ca/patient-education-resources)

Connect with a registered nurse in Nova Scotia any time:  
Call 811 or visit: <https://811.novascotia.ca>

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