



Behavioral Health and Education Specialists

Pre-Operative Psychological Examination Information Sheet

Bariatric surgery is “a weight-loss tool that can resolve obesity-related co-morbidities and improvements in quality of life.”

In most cases, a multidisciplinary screening process is required to ensure the individual seeking the surgery is both physically and psychologically appropriate for, and can benefit from, bariatric surgery.

According to the American Society for Bariatric Surgery

Pre-operative psychological assessment addresses whether the candidate is adequately prepared, from a psychosocial perspective, to go forward with bariatric surgery and whether there is evidence of any barriers that may interfere with patient safety and with adjustment to the surgical procedure.

Psychological assessments prior to bariatric surgery:

- Usually consist of a semi-structured interview and standardized questionnaires, and are considered necessary to facilitate optimal weight loss and weight loss maintenance;
- Are required by most major insurance companies as part of a mandatory requirement preceding surgery approval;
- Are important not only to identify possible psychological contraindications for the surgery, but also to better understand the patient’s motivation, preparation and emotional factors that can both negatively and positively impact the adjustment to life after the surgery and the associated lifestyle changes; and
- Help identify risk factors and formulate treatment plans to improve post-operative outcomes

Possible Pre-Operative Psychological Examination Outcomes

It is possible that, after considering all available examination information, you may not receive immediate psychological approval to move forward with the surgery. In the event you do not immediately receive psychological clearance to have the surgery, your psychologist will discuss with you the reason(s) for this decision and identify the necessary interventions you will need to make to assist you in making the necessary changes so you may eventually be considered psychologically appropriate for the surgery. It is likely your psychologist will recommend you participate in individual and/or group psychotherapy, or other psychological and/or psychiatric interventions, in order to adequately prepare you for surgical clearance.



Behavioral Health and Education Specialists

The degree of postsurgical weight loss success and health improvement ultimately achieved will depend on your ability to develop and maintain the necessary post-surgical lifestyle changes. It is the goal of your psychologist to provide you with the best opportunity for long-term, postsurgical weight loss and health success.

After considering all available pre-operative psychological examination information, your psychologist will arrive at one of the following conclusions:

- You are appropriate to move forward with the bariatric weight loss surgery without any recommendations that you participate in psychological services;
- You are appropriate to move forward with the bariatric weight loss surgery with some recommendations that you participate in psychological service. In this instance, those recommendations will be advisory in nature and do not in any way change the conclusion you have gained psychological clearance to move forward with the surgery;
- You are not currently, from a psychological perspective, appropriate to move forward with the bariatric weight loss surgery. The specific psychological problem areas will be identified and explained to you and recommended psychological interventions to address those psychological problem areas will be presented to you. Once you have adequately addressed those identified psychological problem areas, your psychologist will write an addendum to your pre-operative psychological examination indicating you have adequately resolved all identified psychological problem areas and thus have psychological clearance to move forward with the bariatric weight loss surgery; and
- You are not currently, from a psychological perspective, appropriate to move forward with a bariatric weight loss surgery and are unlikely to be an appropriate surgery candidate in the future.