

Thank you for your interest in our Bariatric Surgery Program at Tampa General Hospital. Enclosed please find our informational booklet and program requirements. This information should answer most, if not all, of your questions about the process, the operation and our program requirements. Additional information about obesity surgery is available in public libraries, the internet and from the American Society for Metabolic and Bariatric Surgery by accessing their website at www.asbs.org and other websites including www.tgh.org and www.zbmi.com.

Prior to scheduling an appointment for your initial consultation, you will be required to attend a **New Patient Orientation Session** and a **New Patient Weight Loss Surgery Support Group Meeting**. The orientation session will provide you with more detailed information about the surgery and our program requirements as well and will help you decide if this surgery is right for you. The support group meeting will allow you to meet many of our post-op patients who will share their life changing experience with you. Dates and times for these meetings are included in this packet.

It is important that you check with your insurance company to ensure that bariatric surgery/weight loss surgery (WLS) is a **covered benefit** of your plan. Not all plans include this type of surgery as a covered benefit.

Our comprehensive Bariatric Team is dedicated to providing you with the highest level of compassionate care. We look forward to seeing you soon!

Michel M. Murr, M.D.
Director of Bariatric Surgery

The Bariatric Team

It is our goal to make available to you the best care possible prior to and after your weight loss surgery. To that end, we have assembled a multidisciplinary team of highly skilled physicians, psychologists, nutritionists and other healthcare providers who are leaders in their fields. Please meet our team . . .

Michel M. Murr, M.D.: Director of Bariatric Surgery at Tampa General Hospital and the University of South Florida. Dr. Murr is board certified, is a member of the American Society for Bariatric Surgery and has performed bariatric surgery for more than eight years. He serves on the Editorial Boards of Surgical Research and Journal of Obesity Surgery as well as the Research Committee of the American Society for Bariatric Surgery.

Werner Andrade, M.D.: Dr. Andrade is currently an Advanced Laparoscopic and Bariatric Surgery Clinical Fellow. He completed his training in general surgery at the Cleveland Clinic in Cleveland, Ohio. He assists in laparoscopic and open procedures as well as multiple ongoing research projects within the Bariatric Multidisciplinary Institute.

Luciano Fiszer M.D.: Dr. Fiszer is currently an Advanced Laparoscopic and Bariatric Surgery Clinical Fellow. He completed his training in general surgery at Tulane University in New Orleans, Louisiana. He assists in laparoscopic and open procedures as well as multiple ongoing research projects within the Bariatric Multidisciplinary Institute.

Denise Edwards, M.D.: Dr. Edwards is board certified in Internal Medicine, is a member of the American Society of Bariatric Physicians and specializes in obesity-related healthcare and prevention. Dr. Edwards provides state-of-the art medical care for our surgical patients.

Perry Kaly, Ph.D.: Dr. Kaly is a licensed psychologist specializing in clinical health psychology, and sport and exercise psychology. He has advanced training in clinical psychopharmacology. His areas of interest include eating disorders, weight management, bariatric surgery, pain management, adjustment to acute and chronic medical illness, psychodiagnostic assessment, and general psychotherapy with adolescents, adults, couples and families.

Andrea Friedman, Ph.D.: Dr. Friedman is a licensed psychologist specializing in health psychology and clinical neuropsychology. Her areas of special interest include stress, diabetes, cancer, dementia, chronic pain, MS, cardiovascular disease, women's' health, weight management, and positive psychology.

Jamie Chase, R.D.: Jamie is a registered and licensed dietitian and nutritionist. She also holds board certification in adult weight management. She provides medical nutritional therapy to patients with gastrointestinal disorders including the bariatric service. She provides initial and follow up nutritional counseling for pre and post-op gastric bypass and adjustable gastric band patients.

Susan Orellana: Bariatric Coordinator. In addition to her program coordinator duties, she conducts the Orientation Sessions and New Patient Support Group Meetings at Tampa General Hospital. She knows the issues all too well, as she has undergone gastric bypass surgery herself.

Barbara Allen, ARNP: Barbara provides perioperative care for patients on the service. She also provides education and support as well as medical direction to patients initially in the pre-operative clinic, during their stay at Tampa General Hospital and finally in the post-operative clinic.

Sandra Sanchez, RN: Sandra is the nurse navigator for the bariatric service. With her nursing experience, she responds to patient inquiries in the pre and post-operative phases. She also facilitates both the pre and post-op support groups.

Elizabeth Brustman: Office Assistant. Liz is responsible for data entry and management of the bariatric database. She is also responsible for general administrative duties.

Am I A Candidate for Weight Loss Surgery?

Individuals who weigh 100 pounds or more over their ideal body weight or have a Body Mass Index (BMI) of 40 kg/m^2 or greater are candidates for weight loss surgery.

Individuals who are less than 100 pounds overweight or have a BMI between $35 - 39 \text{ kg/m}^2$ and have been diagnosed with obesity-related medical conditions may qualify for weight loss surgery.

Assessment and Testing

Prior to your weight loss surgery, we require that you undergo comprehensive medical, psychological and nutritional evaluations. To ensure that you receive the best possible care we will complete this assessment at USF Health. If you are married or involved in a long-term relationship, your spouse or significant other may be required to meet with the psychologist as part of the evaluation process. You may also be required to be evaluated by other specialists (cardiology, pulmonary, etc.) and/or participate in additional psychological and/or nutritional sessions prior to being cleared for surgery.

The cost for the initial comprehensive medical, psychological and nutritional evaluations is \$750. You will be responsible for the cost of this initial assessment. A \$250.00 deposit will be required at the time of scheduling your appointment. MasterCard, Visa, cash and personal checks (with valid ID) are acceptable forms of payment. If you have additional questions, you may contact our office directly at (813) 844-7473.

It is recommended (though NOT required) that you make arrangements through your primary care physician to have the following testing done prior to your scheduled visits at with our assessment team:

- Complete Metabolic Profile (CMP)
- Complete Blood Count (CBC)
- Thyroid Function Test (TFT)
- HbA1C (**diabetics MUST have this test done**)
- Liver Function Test (LFT)
- Lipid Panel
- Iron and ferritin (**if any history of anemia**)
- Colonoscopy (Patients 50+ years old)

Please make arrangements to hand-carry these test results with you to your appointment. You may also bring reports of other tests that have been done in the last 12 months, including stress test, sleep study, lab work and CT scans.

Also, make arrangements to hand-carry the following items to your appointment in order to satisfy insurance requirements:

- A letter of medical necessity from your primary care physician stating that he/she is aware of your intent to have WLS
- Six months of documented physician supervised weight loss attempts (**number of months required is dependant on insurance company requirements**)
- Documentation of an obese weight from five years ago; this can simply be a copy of a progress note indicating your weight

Special Information

Pregnancy within the first two years after weight loss surgery may cause serious medical problems for both the mother and baby; therefore, we recommend that women of childbearing age consult their primary care physician or gynecologist to discuss birth control issues.

Insurance Information

Most insurance companies will pay for weight loss surgery (WLS) if it is a covered benefit of your policy and is medically necessary. Please check with your insurance company to ensure that weight loss surgery is a covered benefit of your policy.

In order to prove “medical necessity” for this surgery, you must provide us with medical records that document your weight related medical conditions for which you are currently being treated. In addition, all insurance companies require proof of **medically supervised** weight loss attempts. Each insurance company has a different requirement for the length of time for these attempts; however, most require six months of weight loss attempts. Please check with your insurance company for their specific requirements.

USF Health has developed monthly weight loss classes that will help you meet the requirements of a medically supervised program and that will assist you in preparing for surgery as well. More information about these classes can be obtained during the New Patient Orientation Session.

Medicare will not pre-certify weight loss surgery, and therefore we must do everything possible prior to your surgery to ensure that your claim will not be denied. Medicare **does require** 18 months of physician supervised weight loss attempts.

Surgery and Post-Operative Care

Your hospital stay should be approximately 2 to 3 days for the gastric bypass procedure and a possible overnight stay for the Lap-Band. You will be given detailed instructions on use of pain medications, other medications as well as for follow up during your hospital stay.

It is very important that you have someone to help you at home after you are discharged from the hospital. Since you will be weak after surgery and may experience difficulty getting in and out of bed, walking and performing basic hygiene necessities, we ask that you have a responsible adult, who is physically able to assist you, available at your home for at least the first week after discharge from the hospital.

Discharge time at Tampa General Hospital is 11:00am. You will be notified the day before impending discharge that you will be going home. Please make appropriate arrangements for transportation. Your transportation should arrive 1 to 2 hours prior to 11:00am discharge. Per hospital regulation, NO EXCEPTIONS.

Your first post-operative follow up appointment will be with our Nurse Practitioner and will be scheduled 3 to 4 weeks after discharge from the hospital. You will be given instructions where to call to make this appointment when you are discharged from the hospital. You will also need to see your primary care physician 2 to 3 weeks after hospital discharge so your medications may be adjusted as necessary. It is highly recommended to make a follow up appointment with the dietitian post-operatively to review dietary requirements.

You will meet with Dr. Murr and staff on a routine basis after your surgery. Normally, after your first post-op visit, additional visits will be scheduled every 3 to 6 months for gastric bypass patients and every 3 to 4 weeks (until desired weekly weight loss is achieved) for Lap-Band patients.

New Patient Orientation
And
New Patient Weight Loss Surgery Support Group

We offer patients two opportunities to attend a New Patient Orientation each month.

An Orientation and Support Group Meeting is held at Tampa General Hospital on the **2nd Thursday** of each month in the **2nd Floor Activity Room of the Rehabilitation Center** (located across from the Emergency Room). **You do not need to pre-register** to attend these meetings. There is no charge to attend either of these meetings. Parking is available in the Tampa General Hospital parking garage. Attendees are responsible for their parking fees.

- **The New Patient Orientation begins at 3:00 pm and concludes at 5:00 pm.** You will be given the opportunity to make your consultation appointment with USF Health at the end of the Orientation so that you may begin the evaluation process. A \$250.00 deposit will be required at the time of scheduling your appointment. MasterCard, Visa, cash and personal checks (with valid ID) are acceptable forms of payment.
- **The New Patient Weight Loss Surgery Support Group begins at 6:30 pm and concludes at 8:00 pm.**

An additional Orientation Meeting is held at Tampa General Hospital on the **4th Monday** of each month in the **2nd Floor Dining Room of the Rehabilitation Center** (located across from the Emergency Room). **You do not need to pre-register** to attend this meeting. There is no charge to attend. Parking is available in the Tampa General Hospital parking garage. Attendees are responsible for their parking fees.

- **The New Patient Orientation begins at 6:00 pm and concludes at 8:00 pm.** You will be given the opportunity to make your consultation appointment with USF Health at the end of the Orientation so that you may begin the evaluation process. A \$250.00 deposit will be required at the time of scheduling your appointment. MasterCard, Visa, cash and personal checks (with valid ID) are acceptable forms of payment.
- No New Patient Weight Loss Surgery Support Group will be held following this meeting. You will need to attend a support group at Tampa General Hospital prior to a scheduled surgery date.

Some of the material discussed may not be appropriate for children, so please do not bring children to these meetings.

Discussing Your Weight Loss Surgery with the Bariatric Surgery Team

After you have attended the New Patient Orientation Session and New Patient Weight Loss Support Group Meeting and have completed the wellness assessment, an appointment will be scheduled for you to meet with Dr. Murr and the members of his surgery team. During this appointment, Dr. Murr and his team will re-evaluate your medical needs as well as your readiness for surgery. They will discuss weight loss expectations of your surgery as well as ensure that you fully understand the risks and possible complications of weight loss surgery. During this appointment, Dr. Murr will also determine if you will have your surgery done laparoscopically or open.

Please be certain to bring your spiral bound Patient Information Booklet to this appointment.

Scheduling A Date for Surgery

Before your surgery can be scheduled, we must obtain a written authorization from your insurance company to perform your surgery. After your appointment with Dr. Murr, your medical records will be delivered to our Pre-Certification Department (usually within one week of your appointment with the surgeon) to be processed and forwarded either by mail or fax to your insurance company. It may take 2 to 6 weeks from the time your records are received by your insurance company for a determination to be made. Once we have received a written authorization to perform your surgery, you will be contacted by Dr. Murr's office to schedule your surgery date.

Involvement in Research Studies

The University of South Florida and Tampa General Hospital are teaching institutions. As a bariatric patient, you may or may not be approached to participate in one of our ongoing research studies. Although we would appreciate your participation, it is voluntary and your relationship with your surgeon will not be affected if you opt to decline.

Frequently Asked Questions

The following are some of the most frequently asked questions about weight loss surgery (WLS) and our program. You will have ample time at the New Patient Orientation to have any of these questions clarified and/or ask questions not covered here.

Q. How soon can I get my initial consultation?

A. The first step is to attend a New Patient Orientation session that is held monthly (see section entitled “New Patient Orientation and Weight Loss Surgery Support Group”). You will be given the opportunity to schedule your assessment with USF Health after the orientation session to begin the process of completing your necessary evaluations. In addition, after the orientation session you can attend a support group meeting that is held the same evening.

Q. Why do I have to attend these meetings?

A. The New Patient Orientation will help you decide if this surgery is right for you. The orientation is led by a member of the Bariatric Team who will ensure that all of your questions concerning pre-surgical and post-surgical requirements are answered. The New Patient Weight Loss Surgery Support Group meeting is run by volunteers who have had weight loss surgery. Attending this meeting gives you the opportunity to talk personally with Dr. Murr’s patients who have “been there and done that”. They know first-hand the ups and downs of weight loss surgery and will be able to share their experiences with you.

Q. What if I have already attended meetings like this somewhere else?

A. Every program is different; therefore, the best way to decide if our program is right for you is to attend the New Patient Orientation and New Patient Weight Loss Surgery Support Group meetings.

Q. Does it cost me anything to attend these meetings? Do I need to pre-register? Who should attend these meetings?

A. There is NO fee to attend either the orientation or support group meeting. If you choose to attend the meetings at Tampa General Hospital, you will need to pay to park in the Tampa General Hospital Parking Garage located adjacent to the hospital. You do not need to pre-register for the meetings held at the hospital. We encourage you to bring your spouse, significant other, or an adult family member to attend with you during these meetings.

Q. Will my insurance pay for weight loss surgery?

A. The answer is usually yes as long as it is a covered benefit of your policy and we can prove medical necessity.

Q. Is the weight loss surgery done laparoscopically?

A. Yes. When you meet with Dr. Murr, he will discuss with you if you are a candidate for laparoscopic surgery.

Q. How long will I be in the hospital?

A. Your hospital stay is estimated to last 3 to 5 days. Longer hospitalizations may be necessary for treatment of complications.

Q. How long will I be out of work?

A. Usually 4 to 6 weeks is the typical recovery time for abdominal surgery. If you have surgery done laparoscopically, your recovery time may be shorter.

Q. After I have completed all of the required evaluations, how long does it take to get an appointment with Dr. Murr? How long after that appointment will it be until my surgery is scheduled?

A. Once you have completed your assessment through USF Health, your records will be delivered to Dr. Murr's office. Generally, it will only take 1 to 2 weeks for you to be seen by Dr. Murr once those records have been received. After your appointment with the surgery team, your medical records will be delivered to our Pre-Certification Department (usually within one week of your appointment with the surgeon) to be processed and forwarded either by mail or fax to your insurance company. It may take between 2 and 6 weeks from the time your records are received by your insurance company for a determination to be made. Once we have received a written authorization to perform your surgery, you will be contacted by Dr. Murr's office to schedule your surgery date.

Q. What is the risk of surgery?

A. Weight loss surgery is a major operation that can result in major complications, including death. A list of complications is included in your spiral bound patient information booklet.

Q. How soon will I begin losing weight?

A. Many patients start losing weight within days after surgery. Keep in mind that you may not lose weight as rapidly as others have or you may lose faster than others may.

Q. How successful is this surgery?

A. The goal of weight loss surgery is to bring your weight down to a healthier weight and treat medical conditions associated with obesity. Following the dietary and exercise guidelines ensures your best chances for success.

Q. Is the gallbladder removed during surgery?

A. The gallbladder is removed during surgery because majorities of patients have developed stones because of long-term dieting. Those who do not have stones at the time of surgery run the risk of developing stones after weight loss surgery.

Q. Is it true that I will have to take vitamins for the rest of my life?

A. Yes. You will need to take a daily vitamin with iron, extra calcium and vitamin B-12. Our dieticians will discuss this with you during your evaluation.

Q. What about hair loss after surgery?

A. Some patients do experience thinning of the hair and/or hair loss after surgery. Our dietician has researched this issue and has found several dietary supplements that may be effective in minimizing this condition.

Q. How long will I have to see Dr. Murr after surgery?

A. You will see the surgery team 2 to 4 weeks after your surgery and then every 3 to 6 months lifetime. Your first post-op appointment will be with the Nurse Practitioner.

Q. Does Dr. Murr do a tummy tuck or will he remove excess skin after weight loss?

A. Once your weight loss has stabilized (usually one to two years after surgery), he will refer you to a plastic surgeon to discuss removal of excess skin.

Q. Can I get pregnant after this surgery?

- A. Yes, you can. It is **VERY** important to wait at least two years after your surgery to become pregnant. You will need this time to adjust physically and emotionally to your weight loss before becoming pregnant.

Checklist

- Verify insurance benefits for WLS. Call your insurance company to ensure that WLS is a covered benefit and to determine the requirements of your plan.
- Attend New Patient Orientation Session.
- Orientation Date: _____
- Attend New Patient Weight Loss Surgery Support Group.
- Support Group Date: _____
- Make appointment to begin assessment process with USF Health.
- Appointment Date: _____
- Items to hand-carry to USF Health:
 - Blood work including CMP, CBC, TFT, HbA1C if diabetic, LFT, Lipid panel, iron and ferritin levels (if any history of anemia)
 - Colonoscopy results (if age 50+)
 - Letter of medical necessity from primary care physician
 - Documentation of medically supervised weight loss attempts as required by your insurance company
 - Documentation of 5 years of obesity (chart note/progress note indicating an obese weight from 5 years ago is sufficient) as required by your insurance company
 - All of the following from the past 12 months as they pertain to you:
 - Cardiac stress test
 - Sleep study
 - CT scans
 - Additional blood work
 - Notes from psychiatrist/psychologist
 - Notes from primary care physician
 - Weight Watcher's booklets
- Obtain clearance from USF Health.
- Schedule appointment to see Dr. Murr.
- Appointment Date: _____
- Submit any items needed to complete your medical file prior to insurance authorization.
- Obtain written authorization from your insurance company.
- Schedule surgery date.
- Surgery date: _____