

Weight Loss Surgery: Winning at the Losing Game

By Ann Biswas

At 330 pounds and battling a list of related ailments, like diabetes, high cholesterol and sleep apnea, Bob Frame, 55, had tried and failed countless diet and exercise plans. But on January 17, Bob's life changed forever. That's the day he underwent gastric bypass surgery at Miami Valley Hospital's Weight Loss Surgery Center and said goodbye and good riddance to his old life.



John Maguire, MD

For many people like Bob, surgery is a "last resort," explains John Maguire, MD, director of the Weight Loss Surgery Center.

Several types of procedures are performed at the center, including Roux-en-Y (RNY) and the biliopancreatic diversion with a duodenal switch (BPD/DS). Both may be done with an open procedure or with a less invasive laparoscopic procedure.

Surgeon Donovan Teel, MD, also performs the lap band procedure, in which an adjustable band is used to create a smaller stomach pouch. With this technique, he explains, "food fills up the pouch quickly, so the patient feels full faster." According to Dr. Teel, "Patients undergoing this laparoscopic surgery lose weight more slowly than with some of the other procedures, but the surgery is the safest and requires the shortest hospital stay."

Deciding which procedure is right for you is an important step in the process. The Weight Loss Surgery Center offers a comprehensive



Bob Frame is enjoying life at full throttle after shedding 65 pounds following gastric bypass surgery.

education program designed to help people understand the options, benefits and risks of each procedure. Many people considering weight loss surgery balance the risk of surgery with the risk of living life morbidly obese.



Dr. Teel discusses weight-loss surgery options with a prospective client.

"Some people say that weight loss surgery is taking the easy way out," says Debra Anderson, program manager. "For many patients like Bob who are morbidly obese, conventional weight loss attempts have not been successful. Studies show that 98 percent fail at sustaining their weight loss after a conventional diet. So, for many who are morbidly obese," she explains, "weight loss surgery is not the easy way out – it's the only way out."

"These people may have trouble doing simple things, like climbing stairs or tying their shoes," says Anderson. "They don't want to watch life from the sidelines anymore. They want to reclaim their life and live again."

Are You a Candidate for Weight Loss Surgery?

According to the Weight Loss Surgery Center, candidates for weight loss surgery must meet the following criteria:

- **Weight:**
 - 100 lbs or 100 percent above desirable weight; or
 - Body Mass Index (BMI) of 40+ (roughly 80-100 pounds overweight); or
 - BMI of 35+ with diabetes or other serious obesity-related condition, such as heart disease or severe sleep apnea
- **A history of failure with non-surgical attempts at weight loss**
- **Absence of endocrine disorders that can cause massive obesity**
- **Psychological stability**
 - Basic understanding of how obesity surgery causes weight loss
 - Realization that surgery itself does not guarantee weight loss
 - Understanding of the goals and risks of surgery
 - Absence of alcohol and drug abuse
 - Commitment to post-op follow-up

For the formula to calculate BMI, visit www.seriousweightloss.org.

Bob says his decision to undergo the RNY procedure at MVH was the best decision of his life. So far, he's lost 65 pounds and has much more energy. Best of all, his overall health is improving.

Bob's decision was made easier because his daughter had bariatric surgery several years ago and has lost more than 100 pounds. "Her surgeon was Dr. Maguire, and we had 100 percent confidence in him," says Bob.

Working alongside Dr. Maguire are a dedicated bariatric nursing unit and a team of physician specialists, respiratory therapists, dietitians, psychologists, exercise physiologists and occupational and physical therapists.

This multidisciplinary approach is what makes the MVH program so strong, explains Claire Rodehaver, RN, nursing director. "We provide experienced care throughout the entire process," she says. "Each patient receives an individualized plan that helps them achieve their best result."



Debbie Thompson, Registered Dietitian, counsels prospective weight-loss candidate Carolyn Noe.

The multilevel approach, says Dr. Maguire, means that MVH has more levels of safety built into the program. "Our experienced staff and multi-specialty care team reduce the likelihood that anything will be missed."



Bob looks forward to sharing a longer, healthier life with daughter Shelly King and grandson, Noah.

Over the past few years, Dr. Maguire says he's seen a tremendous growth in the number of high-risk patients who need weight loss surgery. "The best candidate for the procedure is someone who meets the weight criteria and who can have the surgery before developing all the complications of obesity, such as diabetes," he says.

Anderson is quick to caution that surgery alone is no guarantee of success. Individuals need to be committed to a lifestyle change, she explains. "Following surgery, they will need to change their eating behaviors, and some will need to follow a lifelong regimen of vitamin and protein supplementation."

Bob says he's changed his eating habits and plans to lose another 50 to 60 pounds. "Fat is not happy," he says with a laugh. "That's a myth. I'm much happier now. Best of all, I know that I'll be around to watch my grandson grow up."

Register for a free information session about Miami Valley Hospital's Surgical Weight Loss Program at www.miamivalleyhospital.org or call CareFinders toll free at 1-866-608-FIND (3463).