



healthier weight



# 10 Weight Loss Surgery Myths

## Introduction

With obesity levels higher than ever, and the nation's BMI seemingly creeping up and up every year, huge numbers of people are starting to seriously consider weight loss, or bariatric, surgery.

However, with the growth in the procedures continuing year after year, the stories and myths surrounding it also seem to rise - whether that is horror stories in the press or social media clickbait - weight loss surgery is always an evocative subject.

Misconceptions about the gastric sleeve, band, bypass and balloon often prevent people from having these procedures, resulting in them missing out on the health and quality of life benefits that weight loss brings. With the right surgeon, aftercare and support these procedures deliver fantastic outcomes, and they remain the only effective long term form of treatment for obesity.

Obesity is a disease (it was designated a chronic disease in 2013), not a choice and clinical obesity is defined as a person having a body mass index (BMI) of 30 or above. BMI is calculated using a person's height and weight, and the healthy range is generally considered to be between 22 and 25.

Those with a BMI of 30 or above are likely to meet the Healthier Weight criteria for gastric band or gastric balloon. Those with a BMI above 35 might also be eligible for sleeve and bypass. The ultimate decision on your eligibility will be determined by your surgeon in discussion with you at your 1:1 consultation.

Over the years we have met thousands of people in clinic, many of whom come with incorrect beliefs about weight loss surgery, and in this paper we set out to bust some of the most commonly held myths about weight loss surgery. We've enlisted the support of our Medical Director, Mr Rishi Singhal, to draw on his experience in clinic over the years.

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### **“Aren't all these procedures pretty much the same?”**

No, the 3 main procedures are the gastric sleeve, bypass and band. They all work differently and they have their own pros and cons. What is the best procedure for one patient may not be best for the next. When we speak to you we'll explain the differences and then at consultation your surgeon will explain the implications of each and come to an agreement with you as to which is best.

In general, if you have a higher BMI and/or weight related health issues then the more powerful sleeve and bypass procedures are better. If you have a lower BMI and generally healthy the band might be the favoured procedure.



## 2

### **“I’m a failure and surgery is just a cop out. Why don’t I have the willpower that everyone else seems to have?”**

Nonsense. Our view is quite the opposite. It has been proven scientifically that our genes predispose certain people to obesity. We also need to factor in metabolic rate, how different people generate energy in their bodies and then there are environmental factors. It means that some people are destined to struggle to manage their weight.

We also know that weight loss surgery is the only effective long term form of treatment. Procedures like the gastric sleeve have been shown in numerous studies to deliver 60-70% excess weight loss in the first year after surgery. These procedures work for all types of people. Instead of feeling ashamed about weight loss surgery, flip it around and feel proud you are taking responsibility for your own health and quality of life.

That’s how we view it and the positivity we see in our online patient support group underlines this. A group of people who are proud of what they have done and, often, wishing they had done it sooner.

## 3

### **“What if I lose too much weight?”**

This is a concern we hear from time to time - “Won’t I just keep losing weight?” It’s very rare for this to be an issue and it’s usually quite straightforward to address. We can always increase your calorie consumption if the need arises. The reality is that the power of these procedures diminishes after a couple of years and that is when most people see their weight loss plateau. Most studies show the weight loss achieved after 2 years being the maximum loss. This is because the body adapts to the procedure over time.

Losing too much weight is not something to be worried about. If you, or we had any concerns about this, we would pick it up in clinic before it became a problem.

## Hali lost 11 stone with a gastric sleeve

34-year-old Hali from Bristol has been on a fantastic journey after losing an amazing 11 stone after a gastric sleeve.

Riddled with low self-esteem and depression due to her weight, at the age of 31 Hali decided that enough was enough, it's either now or never.

**[Read more about the gastric sleeve](#)**



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**“Wouldn't it be better to have liposuction instead. That way it's all sucked out in one go?”**

Although this sounds tempting, liposuction is no solution for people who need to lose weight. It is a body contouring procedure that involves the removal of fat cells. Those fat cells are never replaced which means that when those people put on weight it is stored in the remaining cells only. This can lead to a very uneven and at times disfiguring distribution of weight. For this reason, responsible cosmetic surgeons do not do weight loss procedures for those with a BMI above 30.

The better approach is to treat the problem, which is the obesity, and this is done through a gastric band, sleeve or bypass procedure. Once you are a healthy weight you could also consider cosmetic surgery. When you are a healthy weight you can also be more confident of a good cosmetic outcome from surgery.

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## **“Is surgery dangerous because I have a high BMI?”**

For the huge majority of patients, the risks presented by bariatric surgery are very low, especially when you consider your health risks of having such a high BMI. In fact they are comparable to having your gallbladder removed. In almost all cases we can confidently say that the risk of not having surgery is greater than not.

“If you stay morbidly obese,” Mr Singhal says, “you are much more likely to die from heart disease, diabetes, stroke and even some types of cancer.”

As for recovery: It’s typically a very brief process. After band surgery, nearly all patients go home the same day. For sleeve and bypass we like people to stay in hospital for 2 night before. We advise most people to leave a week to make a recovery but modern keyhole surgical techniques are so good that patients are often surprised by how quickly they can return to normal day to day life.

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## **“It’s impossible or dangerous to get pregnant after weight loss surgery”**

On the contrary, bariatric surgery helps with fertility, both for men and for women. Most people with a BMI above 35 will be denied IVF so weight loss surgery can be a way to get access to these services. Often people who have been unable to conceive naturally will do so after weight loss surgery. Often the increase in fertility is so rapid we advise all patients to think carefully about contraception in the period after surgery to avoid any surprises.

We advise that patients wait at least a year after their surgery before trying for a baby. This is to allow time for your nutritional health to stabilise. This is especially important after bypass surgery.

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## “Weight loss surgery isn’t safe for older adults”

This is absolutely not the case. Here at Healthier Weight we have seen a lot of success for people in their 60s and early 70’s. So even if you’re older, don’t hesitate to talk to a specialist about whether you’re a good candidate. At our clinic we set a limit of age 75 for treatment.

## Andrea lost 10 stone with a gastric bypass

“For the first time in a very long time I have something to look forward to - seeing the new me adapt to my new life. I took control of my life. In the last year I’ve changed my job and I’ve found love. I would recommend this to anyone. Please do consider it if you want to change your life” - Andrea

[Read more about the gastric bypass](#)



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## “Won’t I need surgery to remove excess skin?”

It’s impossible to say. Whether you will have excess skin depends on a number of factors. [You can read all those here.](#)

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## “It’s very expensive”

It’s all relative though, and looking at how much you will save, and weight loss surgery cost will depend on your own personal circumstances. However, once you have decided to go we agree upfront the total price of your weight loss treatment and once you start we will put your mind at ease to make your life as easy as possible.

### This price includes the following:

- Surgery
- Follow-up appointments
- Comprehensive aftercare
- Support throughout from your clinical team
- Advice on Nutrition
- Access to a private forum to link with other weight loss surgery success stories

We guarantee that the price won’t change even if you have to stay in hospital longer than expected so you can fully concentrate on your recovery, losing weight and enjoying your new life.

Every patient and their needs are different however, so to get an accurate price for your treatment you will need a consultation with one of our specialists.

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## “My hair will all fall out”

Its true, but In our experience fewer than 1 in 1,000 patients experience this. Even if you are one of the very unfortunate ones, be assured it does grow back.

We advise all patients on the vitamins and minerals they need to take after surgery. By taking these you are likely to maintain a healthy nutritional balance. We also take bloods 6 months after your surgery (sleeve and bypass) to make sure you are nutritionally well.

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**“It gives you a new lease on life”**

**YES!** Of course it does...

Bariatric surgery not only changes your body — by reducing your risk of many serious diseases — but also your overall quality of life. It has potential to change your physical and mental health beyond recognition, many patients tell us it has given them their life back.

Whether your motivation to deal with your weight issues is motivated by not needing an extra seat on the plane, being able to keep up with the kids/grandkids without getting out of breath, being able to go on the rides at Alton Towers or Disneyland with your children or even something seemingly simple like being able to go for a long walk, bariatric surgery can be the answer. It won't just help you live longer. It will help you live better.

[CLICK HERE TO EXPLORE YOUR WEIGHT LOSS SURGERY OPTIONS](#)

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