How does bariatric surgery affect metabolic syndrome?

By Abhiman Cheeyandira

How does bariatric surgery affect metabolic syndrome? Metabolic syndrome is a condition categorized by having three or more of the following symptoms: high blood pressure, high blood sugar levels, high triglycerides, low HDL (“good”) cholesterol, or waist circumference greater than 35 inches for women and 40 inches for men. Metabolic syndrome is closely associated with obesity — calculated as a body mass index (BMI) above 30 (for instance, a 5-foot-5 person who weighs 180). One in three U.S. adults struggles with obesity, and more than 80 percent of obese adults will suffer from metabolic syndrome, putting them at risk for serious health complications such as cardiovascular disease, fatty liver disease, peripheral artery disease, atherosclerosis, and diabetes.

You can treat symptoms of metabolic syndrome by modifying your normal behaviors and routines. Exercise regularly, control food portions, and maintain a healthy, low-carb, low-sugar diet. You should also work with your physician to create a comprehensive fitness plan. Despite these efforts, you may struggle to modify your eating and exercise habits. If so, your physician may recommend one of several bariatric weight-loss surgeries.

Gastric bypass surgery is one of the most common and effective weight-loss surgeries performed today. Gastric bypass reduces the size of the stomach and redirects — or “bypasses” — it directly to the small intestine, which restricts how much food the stomach can hold and reduces the absorption of food. Consequently, you feel full more quickly while eating less food. Gastric bypass can help patients lose up to 75 percent of their excess weight.

Vertical sleeve gastrectomy is a newer, more popular option than gastric bypass. Surgeons reshape the stomach and reduce its size by as much as 80 percent, without the need to redirect it. As a result, food moves more slowly through the stomach, which slows the feeling of fullness. After the procedure, patients typically lose about 60 percent of their excess weight.

In a duodenal switch surgery, surgeons reduce the size of the stomach, similar to the vertical sleeve gastrectomy, and also bypass much of the small intestine. Patients who undergo duodenal switch surgery can lose as much as 80 percent of their excess weight, which makes this procedure very beneficial for patients with severe diabetes or obesity.

Studies show that after bariatric surgery, metabolic syndrome is resolved in nearly 90 percent of patients. Bariatric surgery is just one aspect of treating metabolic syndrome and obesity. Patients must maintain a healthy diet before and after surgery and exercise regularly to avoid regaining lost weight.

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