

UW Medicine

In collaboration with



ADOLESCENT BARIATRIC PROGRAM



Weight loss surgery is not a quick fix or an “easy way out.” It’s hard work: patients will need to eat in a different way for the rest of their lives. Doctors recommend surgery only for those who have the motivation and commitment to make lifelong changes, and the support of their family to help them do so.

Seattle Children’s Adolescent Bariatric Program — If you would like a referral to Adolescent Medicine for an evaluation or to discuss Seattle Children’s Adolescent Bariatric Program, talk to your primary care provider. If you already have a referral, please call 206-987-2028 to schedule an appointment.



For some obese teens, diet and exercise aren’t enough. When regular weight loss attempts have failed and medical problems persist, surgery might be an option.

UW Medicine and Seattle Children’s have partnered to offer weight loss (bariatric) surgery for adolescents. Together, we take a multidisciplinary team approach to help teens and their families determine whether surgery is the right option for them.

There are two approaches to bariatric surgery:

- Restriction limits the amount of food a person can eat by reducing the size of the stomach.
- Diversion lets food “skip” part of the intestinal tract so fewer calories are absorbed by the body.

Am I a candidate?

In general, weight loss surgery is for teens who:

- Have a body mass index (BMI) of 35 or higher with diabetes or 40 or higher otherwise.
- Are 15 or older and physically and emotionally mature and healthy enough for surgery.
- Have significant medical problems related to their obesity, such as diabetes, sleep apnea, increased brain pressure, or high cholesterol.

Our program

All candidates for bariatric surgery must be referred into Seattle Children’s Adolescent Wellness Program. Teens who meet the criteria for surgery will join a 16-week weight management program and receive care from a medical provider, a nutritionist, a social worker, and a fitness specialist.

The final step is an evaluation by a member of the UW Medicine bariatric surgery team. Patients who qualify for surgery will then work with a nutritionist to start a very low-calorie, high-protein diet. Surgery is performed at the University of Washington Medical Center, with long-term follow up care at Seattle Children’s Hospital.