

# How to Support a Bariatric Surgery Patient

## A guide for friends and family of weight loss surgery patients

### Understanding how obesity impacts health

#### The cause of obesity is complex

Obesity is often misinterpreted as laziness and a lack of self-discipline. The belief that dieting and exercise are all that's needed to overcome obesity is simply not true. Unfortunately, diet and exercise are often not enough to help people lose weight and keep it off. Research has shown that genetics may be an underlying cause of morbid obesity for many people. Other causes may include metabolic disorders and hormonal imbalances.<sup>i</sup>

Morbid obesity has been linked to several serious and life-threatening diseases, including:

- Type 2 diabetes
- High blood pressure
- High cholesterol
- Heart disease
- Obstructive sleep apnea
- Depression
- Cancer

The stigma associated with obesity can impact emotional health as well. Research shows that obesity discrimination exists in the workplace, at school, in social situations, and even in healthcare settings. Because the bias against obesity can be subtle, the accumulated effects may not be obvious.

#### Weight loss and health benefits

Diet and exercise are relatively ineffective treatments to help patients with morbid obesity achieve and maintain weight loss over the long term.<sup>5</sup> Weight loss surgery is typically more effective.

Losing weight with the REALIZE™ Solution for gastric bypass, gastric banding, or sleeve gastrectomy can help resolve obesity-related health conditions. For example, a comprehensive clinical review of bariatric surgery data showed that type 2 diabetes was resolved in 78% of patients and resolved or improved in 87% of patients undergoing bariatric surgery.<sup>ii</sup>



### Quality of life improvements

Clinical studies of laparoscopic (minimally invasive) bariatric surgery patients found that they felt better, spent more time doing recreational and physical activities, benefited from enhanced productivity and economic opportunities, and had more self-confidence than they did prior to surgery.<sup>5</sup>

### Success through support

If you are a friend or loved one of someone considering the REALIZE™ Solution† for gastric banding, gastric bypass, or sleeve gastrectomy, you are probably aware of the day-to-day struggles of living with obesity, as well as the related health issues. Your loved one's decision to consider bariatric surgery means he or she is ready to make a commitment to achieve and maintain a healthier weight. To succeed, he or she will need your support and encouragement.

This guide will help you understand more about bariatric surgery, address common concerns, and offer suggestions to help you show your support. For more information regarding weight loss surgery, visit [www.Realize.com](http://www.Realize.com).

### Support through action

To be an effective member of your loved one's support team, it's important to know the facts about obesity and the type of weight loss surgery he or she has chosen. Here are some specific things you can do to demonstrate your support.

- **Attend a free information seminar with your loved one.** Seminars are hosted by bariatric clinics and provide an excellent opportunity to learn about the weight loss procedure and to have all your questions answered. Sharing this experience with your loved one shows how much you care and will provide you with helpful information to allow you to have more knowledgeable discussions.
- **Attend a support group.** Support groups provide a comfortable way to learn about bariatric surgery. You may meet patients who have had weight loss surgery, so you can hear first hand what the experience is like and what your loved one can expect.
- **Support your loved one's new lifestyle.** Become an active partner by participating in his or her new healthy eating habits and exercise program.
- **Encourage and celebrate success.** Always be positive, be supportive, be enthusiastic, and celebrate your loved one's victories!



## The REALIZE Solution for gastric banding, gastric bypass, and sleeve gastrectomy

The REALIZE Solution helps patients lose significant weight and improve their health. The REALIZE Solution pairs a surgical procedure with the REALIZE mySUCCESS® Program—a Web-based clinical support tool designed to help patients achieve and maintain a healthier weight. In fact, it has been shown that REALIZE Band patients who frequently use REALIZE mySUCCESS® lose significantly more weight.\*

REALIZE mySUCCESS® is designed to meet the unique needs of bariatric patients. It helps them:

- Progress through the five different eating phases after surgery (from liquids to solids) with sample daily meals, staged over time
- Adopt good eating and hydration habits, including better food choices, portion control, smaller bites, thorough chewing, and separating liquids from meals
- Identify emotional eating triggers by allowing patients to track calorie intake by mood, setting, and planned versus unplanned meals
- Take the proper nutritional supplements for optimum health, in accordance with the American Society for Metabolic and Bariatric Surgery (ASMBS) guidelines
- Stay motivated and on track by setting goals and by creating personal plans, reminders, coping strategies, and support systems to achieve them

## REALIZE Adjustable Gastric Band

The REALIZE™ Band provides a safe and effective way to achieve and maintain a healthier weight—without cutting or stapling the stomach. The REALIZE Band reduces the amount of food that can be consumed so patients feel full sooner and stay full longer.

### Weight loss and health benefits

- Patients in a 3-year clinical trial lost a mean of 40 percent of their excess weight at one year and 43% at three years.<sup>ii</sup>
- In the same clinical trial, the REALIZE Band helped resolve 48.7% of type 2 diabetes, 78.3% of high cholesterol, and 94.6% of sleep apnea problems.<sup>3</sup>
- REALIZE Band patients with type 2 diabetes in the 3-year trial experienced a statistically significant reduction in HbA1c (the key indicator of type 2 diabetes.)<sup>3</sup>
- Patients in the US clinical trial experienced a 22% increase in good cholesterol (HDL) 36 months after surgery. They also experienced a decrease in bad cholesterol (LDL), total cholesterol, and triglycerides.<sup>3</sup>



### How the band works to help patients lose weight

The REALIZE Band reduces the amount of food that can be eaten at one time. The REALIZE Band is wrapped around the upper part of the stomach, dividing the stomach into a small upper pouch that holds about ½ cup of food and a larger lower stomach. As a result, the patient feels full sooner and stays full longer. The REALIZE Band allows for normal digestion and absorption. Eating less means the body stops storing excess calories and starts using its fat supply for energy.

### Implanting the REALIZE Band

Using laparoscopic surgery, the REALIZE Band is implanted while the patient is under anesthesia. Laparoscopic surgery is considered to be minimally invasive because it's performed through small incisions. A laparoscopic procedure usually results in a shorter hospital stay, faster recovery, smaller scars, and less pain than open surgical procedures. Implanting the REALIZE Band does not involve cutting or stapling of the stomach, and the intestines are not re-routed, so the body can continue to absorb nutrients from food.

### Gastric Bypass

Roux-en-Y gastric bypass is one of the most frequently performed procedures for morbid obesity in the US. Gastric bypass uses both a restrictive and a malabsorptive surgery technique. It restricts both food intake and the amount of calories and nutrients the body absorbs. In addition to creating a smaller stomach pouch, the surgery changes the body's normal digestive process. As a result, food bypasses a large part of the stomach and most of the small intestine.

### Weight loss and health benefits

Gastric bypass surgery studies show that patients typically lose 61.6% of excess weight in the first year after surgery. A comprehensive clinical review of bariatric surgery data showed that patients who had a bariatric surgical procedure experienced complete resolution or improvement of their obesity-related health problems (known as co-morbid conditions), including type 2 diabetes, hyperlipidemia (high lipid or fat levels in the bloodstream), high blood pressure, and obstructive sleep apnea.<sup>5</sup>

### How it works to help patients lose weight

A gastric bypass restricts food intake and the amount of calories and nutrients the body absorbs. During the procedure, the surgeon creates a small stomach pouch and then attaches a section of the small intestine directly to the pouch. This allows food to bypass a portion of the small intestine, which absorbs calories and nutrients. With a smaller stomach pouch, the patient feels full sooner and eats less food; bypassing a portion of the small intestine means the body absorbs fewer calories. Patients report an early sense of fullness and satisfaction that reduces the desire to eat.

### The gastric bypass procedure

A gastric bypass can be performed using open surgery or laparoscopic surgery. Laparoscopic surgery is considered to be minimally invasive because it's performed through small incisions. A laparoscopic procedure usually results in a shorter hospital stay, faster recovery, smaller scars, and less pain than open surgical procedures. Most surgeons prefer the laparoscopic approach.

### Sleeve Gastrectomy

A sleeve gastrectomy is a restrictive surgical weight loss procedure, which limits the amount of food patients can eat by reducing the size of the stomach.

### How it works to help people lose weight

During this procedure, a thin vertical sleeve of stomach is created using a stapling device, and the rest of the stomach is removed. The sleeve is about the size of a banana. This procedure limits the amount of food you can eat and helps you feel full sooner. It allows for normal digestion and absorption. Food consumed passes through the digestive tract in the usual order, allowing it to be fully absorbed in the body.

### Sleeve gastrectomy leads to significant weight loss and improved health

Sleeve gastrectomy patients have been shown to experience significant weight loss and improvements in their health. Studies demonstrated that patients lost an average of 54% of their excess weight.

**Table 1. Health improvements after sleeve gastrectomy surgery**

A clinical study on sleeve gastrectomy showed the following health benefits.

Health problem (comorbidity)	Result after sleeve gastrectomy	
	Resolved	Improved
Type 2 diabetes	14%	86% <sup>7</sup>
High blood pressure	42% <sup>7</sup>	55% <sup>7</sup>
High cholesterol	5% <sup>7</sup>	77% <sup>7</sup>
Obstructive sleep apnea	39% <sup>7</sup>	61% <sup>7</sup>
Acid reflux/GERD	57% <sup>7</sup>	43% <sup>7</sup>



### The sleeve gastrectomy procedure

The majority of weight loss sleeve gastrectomies performed today use a laparoscopic technique, which is considered minimally invasive. Laparoscopic surgery usually results in a shorter hospital stay, faster recovery, smaller scars, and less pain than open surgical procedures.

The length of time of the surgery varies. One study found that the average operative time was 1.5 to 3.5 hours and the average hospital stay was 2 to 5 days. Patients usually return to normal activities in 2 weeks and are fully recovered in 3 weeks.<sup>ix</sup>

Laparoscopic sleeve gastrectomy can be the first step before gastric bypass or it can be a single procedure for weight loss. If a sleeve gastrectomy is used as part of a two-step procedure, the first step is for the surgeon to create the small stomach “sleeve.” After a period of time determined by the surgeon, another procedure would be done in which the surgeon attaches a section of the small intestine directly to the stomach pouch. This allows food to bypass a portion of the small intestine. Doing so enables your body to absorb fewer calories, in addition to consuming less food. This two-step procedure may be done because patients may not be able to tolerate both procedures during a single operation. Studies show that the two-step procedure has been used successfully in patients with a BMI greater than 50 or in high-risk patients.<sup>x</sup>

### Why a REALIZE Solution?

Experts agree that to lose weight—and keep it off—weight loss surgery patients require help to adopt a new healthy lifestyle and to stay in touch with their bariatric team. That’s why the REALIZE™ Solution provides more than a weight loss procedure. Patients who choose the REALIZE Solution gain exclusive access to the REALIZE mySUCCESS® Program, a Web-based clinical support tool designed to help patients achieve and maintain a healthier weight.

REALIZE mySUCCESS® is available exclusively to patients who choose the REALIZE Solution for gastric banding, gastric bypass, or sleeve gastrectomy.

### REALIZE mySUCCESS® Program Benefits

We developed the REALIZE mySUCCESS® Program in consultation with bariatric surgeons, dietitians, and behavior modification specialists. They identified two essential stages for success following bariatric surgery. Phase 1: building healthy habits over the first 18 months. Phase 2: staying motivated, on track, and connected with the patient’s bariatric practice over the next 18 months and beyond.



REALIZE mySUCCESS® helps patients adjust to their new lifestyle, teaches new healthy habits, lets patients track their progress, keeps them connected with their bariatric team, and allows their surgeons to step in precisely when needed to keep them on track. In fact, it has been shown that REALIZE Band patients who frequently use REALIZE mySUCCESS® lose significantly more weight.\*

What are the potential risks and complications of weight loss surgery?

As with any procedure, weight loss surgery presents risks. Some are associated with all forms of abdominal surgery, some are procedure specific, and some may be unique to the patient. If the patient has health conditions such as heart disease or diabetes, or takes certain medications (such as blood-thinning medications), or has had other surgeries, the surgeon will inform him or her about specific risks for bariatric surgery.

### Potential postsurgical complications<sup>xi</sup>

One or all of the following conditions and complications are possible following all types of weight loss surgery procedures, as well as for all types of gastric surgical procedures.

#### Potentially serious complications

Surgical:

Perforation of stomach/intestine or leakage, causing peritonitis or abscess

- Internal bleeding requiring transfusion
- Severe wound infection, opening of the wound, incisional hernia
- Spleen injury requiring removal/other organ injury
- Gastric outlet or bowel obstruction

Pulmonary:

- Pneumonia, atelectasis (collapse of lung tissue), fluid in chest
- Respiratory insufficiency, pulmonary edema (fluid in lungs)
- Blood clots in legs/lungs (embolism)

Cardiovascular:

- Myocardial infarction (heart attack), congestive heart failure
- Arrhythmias (irregular heartbeats)
- Stroke (cerebrovascular accident)

#### Kidney and liver:

- Acute kidney failure
- Liver failure
- Hepatitis (may progress to cirrhosis)

#### Psychosocial:

- Anorexia nervosa, bulimia
- Postoperative depression, dysfunctional social problems
- Psychosis

#### Death

#### Other complications (may become serious):

- Minor wound or skin infection/scarring, deformity, loose skin
- Urinary tract infection
- Allergic reactions to drugs or medications
- Vomiting or nausea/inability to eat certain foods/improper eating
- Inflammation of the esophagus (esophagitis), acid reflux (heartburn)
- Low sodium, potassium, or blood sugar; low blood pressure
- Problems with the outlet of the stomach (narrowing or stretching)
- Anemia, metabolic deficiency (iron, vitamins, minerals), temporary hair loss
- Constipation, diarrhea, bloating, cramping, malodorous stool or gas
- Development of gallstones or gallbladder disease
- Stomach or outlet ulcers (peptic ulcer)
- Staple-line disruption, weight gain, failure to lose satisfactory weight
- Intolerance to refined sugars (dumping), with nausea, sweating, weakness

Surgery should not be considered until the patient and doctor have evaluated all other options.

\* Patients who frequently use REALIZE mySUCCESS® lose significantly more weight. Based on 12 months of patient-reported data from REALIZE Band patients using REALIZE mySUCCESS®. Frequent users were in the top third of patients based on frequency of entering a weight into REALIZE mySUCCESS®. Source: Ethicon Endo-Surgery, data on file.

† The REALIZE Solution combines REALIZE mySUCCESS® with the use of select surgical instruments.

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