Gastric Bypass Just As Effective In Teenagers As Adults

Teenagers with severe obesity can benefit from gastric bypass surgery just as much as adults. A study by Sahlgrenska Academy, University of Gothenburg, Sweden and Karolinska Institutet, Sweden found that 81 teenagers lost an average of 96.8 pounds following surgery, significantly improving their health and quality of life. The study, published by the *International Journal of Obesity*, involved eighty-one 13-18 year-olds who had gastric bypass surgery, which had previously been performed on people younger than 18 in exceptional cases only.

The new study found that gastric bypass surgery is just as effective in teenagers as in adults. At two-year follow-up, the teenagers had averaged weight loss from 292.6 to 195.8 pounds, their self-rated quality of life had increased and a number of risk factors for cardiovascular disease – primarily insulin levels – had greatly improved."The teenagers who participated in the study represent a highly vulnerable group, with a history of psycho-social problems related to obesity, including bullying and underlying mental disease," says Torsten Olbers, a researcher at Sahlgrenska Academy, Senior Surgeon at Sahlgrenska University Hospital, and the leader of the study.

"With that in mind, the results are surprisingly good. We will certainly want to carefully examine potential adverse effects of gastric bypass surgery in teenagers. But no other treatment is currently available for this group. Moreover, we know from earlier studies that teenagers with severe obesity are at risk of developing other diseases and poorer quality of life as adults. For that reason, we hope that the method can eventually be offered to more teenagers," Torsten Olbers concludes.

"Given that these teenagers have tried all other weight control options and are extremely difficult to treat, pediatricians are very receptive to a new treatment method," says Professor Claude Marcus at Karolinska Institutet, who was the pediatrician in charge. The researchers stress that gastric bypass surgery does not automatically have an effect on psychological problems. Some of the teenagers continued to experience them despite having lost weight. Furthermore, surgical complications such as volvulus and gallstones required follow-up surgery in some cases.

Source URL (retrieved on *07/23/2014 - 12:43pm*):
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