Gastric Bypass Surgery: Follow Up To Lose More Weight

Gastric bypass patients who attended five follow-up office visits in two years as recommended by their surgeons lost nearly twice as much weight (113 lbs. vs. 57 lbs.) as patients who attended only two follow-up visits, according to a University of Pennsylvania School of Nursing study in Obesity Surgery.

The global epidemic of overweight and obese people is estimated to include 1.7 billion individuals, with two-thirds of those living in the U.S. Measurement of body mass index (BMI), a calculation of height and weight, classifies obesity. Patients with severe obesity (a BMI of 40 or higher) are candidates for bariatric surgery when they have at least one co-occurring condition such as Type II diabetes, high blood pressure, or sleep apnea.

In this study, gastric bypass patients who attended the recommended five follow-up visits with a healthcare provider lost an average of 113 pounds by two years after the surgery. Patients who kept only two follow-up visits lost an average of 57 pounds by the two-year mark.

“For optimal weight loss after gastric bypass surgery, follow-up with a clinician is important,” said lead author Dr. Charlene Compher, a professor of nutrition science at Penn Nursing. “These findings demonstrate that contact with healthcare providers is key in motivating patients to achieve optimal weight loss. The findings also suggest that patients with greater motivation for personal health are more likely to attend office visits.”

Since self-reported weights in individuals with obesity are typically under-estimated, the use of weights measured by clinicians in this study is especially significant, said Dr. Compher. Similarly, this study indicates the need for strategies to optimize patient follow-up.

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