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Your guide to bariatric surgery **Institutes of Quality®** **bariatric surgery** **facilities**



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You're seriously thinking about weight-loss surgery

You know the risks of morbid obesity. You've discussed them with your doctor. It's a chronic disease that can result in related illnesses, such as diabetes and high blood pressure.

With your doctor's guidance, you may have tried several approaches to losing weight. None have worked. You both agree that bariatric, or weight-loss, surgery might be the right treatment.

We created this guide for you, if you're 18 and over, to help you prepare for and recover from bariatric surgery, so you can get back to living your life.



Making an informed decision

Bariatric surgery is not a quick fix or a cure. It is the first step on a lifelong path toward a healthier lifestyle. And it can lead to a healthier you. Therefore, it's important to understand the surgery, the risks and the lifestyle changes.

Do your homework. Hospitals or surgeons often have classes to explain the types of surgery. Attending one helps you understand the risks and benefits.

Ask questions. It's your right to ask questions so you understand the surgery.

<i>What type of surgery will be used? What are the risks?</i>	<i>What kinds of lifestyle changes and dietary changes will I need to make?</i>	<i>What will the surgery cost?</i>	<i>How much weight might I lose? How quickly?</i>
<i>How long should I plan to be off work?</i>	<i>How long will I be in the hospital?</i>	<i>How many weight-loss surgeries has my doctor done?</i>	<i>What kind of ongoing doctor appointments will I need?</i>
			<i>What are the follow-up procedures and care that I may need?</i>

Count on your secure member website. It is also a great resource. Just visit **www.aetna.com**. When you log in, select “Making decisions about your health? Learn more about treatment options from Emmi.” There you can learn more about working with your doctor, understanding treatment options, making confident choices and navigating the surgery process for better results.



Getting the quality you deserve

Seek facilities known for quality care. As an Aetna member, you have a special network of hospitals and other facilities that specialize in certain weight-loss procedures. We call them our Institutes of Quality facilities.

Facilities earn Institutes of Quality status for showing high levels of quality and efficiency in bariatric procedures. We measure many factors, like the level of care patients receive, how often patients return to the hospital after surgery and more.

Visit our DocFind® online directory to find Institutes of Quality bariatric surgery facilities and specialists who have privileges at these hospitals.*

*Review your plan documents to find out if you are required to use an Institutes of Quality facility.

Going ahead with surgery

Once you've decided to proceed, there are steps you must take to use your coverage more effectively. They can also lead to more positive outcomes.

Check your plan documents. See if your health insurance or health benefits plan covers bariatric surgery. If you have coverage, check if you meet Aetna's clinical criteria for bariatric surgery by reviewing the clinical policy bulletin for obesity surgery (CPB 157). Also, understand the costs you're responsible for based on your benefits, and learn if the hospital and surgeon you choose will affect your coverage.

Get evaluations. You might be required to get several evaluations:

Medical

*Nutritional
and
dietary*

*Behavioral
health*

Complete all paperwork. Work with your surgeon and the office staff to get prior approval from your health insurance company before you have the surgery. Make sure all required paperwork is completed. This ensures that you can use your plan coverage efficiently.

Depending on your plan, an Aetna nurse may call you before or after your procedure if it requires admission to the hospital.

Ask questions along the way. If you're unsure of what your plan covers or have other questions about your upcoming surgery, you can get information by:

- Having a chat with Ask Ann, your virtual assistant, through your Aetna Navigator® secure member website
- Calling the number on the back of your Aetna ID card

Take care of health needs. Ask your surgeon:

- For educational materials to help you quit smoking if you're a smoker. You can also check the "Health Programs" page on the Aetna Navigator website to see the health and wellness programs available to you as an Aetna member.
- For advice on taking your current medications.

Plan for the future. Diet, exercise and lifestyle changes are important for your best outcomes. Talk with your doctor, nutritionist or dietitian about these changes.

Get work and home life in order:

- Check with your doctor about physical limitations after surgery.
- Ask family and friends for help with driving and chores.
- Schedule time off work with your employer.
- Make sure you have the phone numbers of your family, friends and pharmacy in your cell phone or on a list.

Preparing to leave the hospital

Before you head home, get the information you need to take care of yourself.

Know your discharge plan. This is a list of instructions. It includes activity limits, diet and vitamin supplements, pain control, exercise, and doctor appointments or lab tests.

Learn the warning signs. Make sure you understand how to spot problems that will require a call to a doctor. Leave the hospital with a list of your surgical team's names and phone numbers, so you can ask questions from home.

Understand your prescription drugs. Get written prescriptions in hand before leaving the hospital. Or confirm they were called in to your pharmacy. If you are an Aetna Pharmacy member, you can check the price of your prescriptions in Aetna Navigator.

Ask questions:

*What is
each drug
for?*

*How and
when do I
take each
drug?*

*What are
possible
side effects?*

*Should I avoid
taking other
drugs or eating
certain foods
with these
prescriptions?*

Manage chronic conditions. Ask if you need to change anything about blood sugar monitoring, sleep apnea machines, or drugs for diabetes, high blood pressure or high cholesterol during your recovery.

Returning home to a new routine

Keep information handy. Put your discharge instructions and your doctor's and pharmacy's phone numbers in a place that's easy to find. If you do not understand the instructions, call your doctor.

Use your prescriptions. Make sure to fill your prescriptions for drugs and supplies ordered by the doctor. For supplies and equipment, go to a home health store or pharmacy. Be sure to check our online directory through your member website to locate network pharmacies and other facilities in your area.

Drink liquids. Water is best. Your surgical team probably explained how to take sips, drink small quantities at a time, drink liquids between meals, and avoid straws and carbonated beverages (to avoid swallowing air and bloating).

Follow the diet. Eat as instructed by your doctor, dietitian or nutritionist. Know the types and amounts of foods to eat and which foods to avoid. Be ready to puree food or use other special techniques if needed. And be sure you take daily vitamins and supplements as advised by your doctor.

Follow the doctor's orders. Limit activity when you first get home. Know when you are allowed to drive, return to work and start normal activities. Begin to increase activity levels with regular exercise. Avoid or stop smoking. And continue to take regular deep breaths to keep lungs expanded and healthy.

Attend a support group. You may find it helpful to share your experience with others who have had the surgery. Your doctor, a local hospital or the Internet can help you find a support group.

Schedule appointments. Call to make follow-up visits and appointments for lab tests with your surgeon or other health care providers.



Getting back to being a healthier you

Log in to your secure member website at **www.aetna.com**.

Select “Find a Doctor, Dentist or Facility” to access the online directory.

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Policy forms issued in OK include: HMO OK COC-5 09/07, HMO/OK GA-3 11/01, HMO OK POS RIDER 08/07, GR-23 and/or GR-29/GR-29N.

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