# Is Bariatric Surgery Safe?

Close-up of hands holding a piece of paper

Description automatically generated with low confidence

<https://www.twenty20.com/photos/c491b5bf-acf1-4909-af1b-b8e3e0294f9c/?utm_t20_channel=bl>

There is a lot of misinformation surrounding bariatric surgery, and it’s likely that some of what you’ve heard is mere hearsay. But if you’re ready to pursue bariatric surgery to change your life for the better, what you really want to understand is whether or not bariatric surgery is safe.

## Surgery Requirements

It’s important to understand that bariatric surgery isn’t offered as the first weight-loss option for people. It is often only turned to when individuals are unable to lose weight despite repeated diet and exercise regimens. Many people choose bariatric procedures to improve their health because they are at an elevated risk of life-threatening diseases like heart disease, certain cancers, and Type 2 diabetes. They may already have some health problems related to weight, such as high blood pressure. Regardless, patients are unable to undergo bariatric surgery unless they meet certain guidelines.

## Surgery Risks

There is always a risk when you undergo surgery under anesthesia, whether it’s for a broken bone or bariatric surgery. [Risks of surgery](https://www.mayoclinic.org/tests-procedures/bariatric-surgery/about/pac-20394258) include: excess bleeding, infection of surgery site, blood clots, and reactions to anesthesia. While death is extremely rare, it is important to note that there is risk of death with even the simplest surgeries. With bariatric surgery, you may also experience leaks in the gastrointestinal system. Before undergoing bariatric surgery, your surgery team will conduct thorough tests to ensure you are healthy enough for surgery. You may have to change your habits before surgery, such as eliminating smoking and drinking.

## Risks Depending on Type of Bariatric Procedure

There are several different types of bariatric surgery—among the most common being gastric bypass, sleeve gastrectomy, and gastric banding (the Lap-Band® Procedure). The risk of complications goes up depending on how complicated the surgery you choose is. For instance, during gastric bypass surgery, a small stomach pouch is cut and part of the small intestine is cut and sewn directly into the pouch. During a sleeve gastrectomy, a majority of the stomach is removed. The Lap-Band Procedure, however, does not require any cutting or rerouting of the intestines or stomach, making it a safer, simpler procedure with fewer complications and lower mortality rates. A band is laparoscopically placed at the top of the stomach, creating a smaller stomach pouch. It also does not take as long to perform as other bariatric procedures. The procedure is typically performed in less than an hour, and you can usually return home the same day. It boasts the shortest recovery time of all the bariatric procedures. If for any reason your Lap-Band needs to be removed, it is easily reversible, unlike other bariatric procedures.

## Safety Conclusion

Despite some risks, bariatric surgery is still considered one of the [safest surgeries](https://www.medicinenet.com/how_dangerous_is_bariatric_surgery/article.htm) patients can undergo, especially when you consider the technological advancements made in recent years and the improved aftercare programs. It is also important to note that taking on surgery risks may mitigate the consequences of morbid obesity, such as diabetes, heart disease, and other weight-related health conditions.

©2021 ReShape Lifesciences Inc    All Rights Reserved Part Number 04-0782 Rev A

**Meta Description:** Is bariatric surgery a safe weight-loss option? Learn more about bariatric surgery and why it could be a safe weight-loss option for you.