

PEBB BARIATRIC SURGERY QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

1. **What is bariatric surgery?** It's surgery on the stomach and/or intestines to help a person with extreme ("morbid") obesity lose weight. Bariatric surgery is an option for people who have a body mass index (BMI) above 35 with a diagnosis of diabetes, a BMI of 40 with any co-morbid condition or a BMI more than 50 with or without a co-morbid condition. You can find your BMI by using the BMI calculator by visiting www.nhlbisupport.com/bmi/bmicalc.htm.
2. **What is morbid obesity?** Morbid obesity is defined as a BMI of 40 or greater.
3. **What does co-morbid mean?** It's a disease or other pathological process that occurs simultaneously with another. Examples of co-morbid conditions commonly associated with obesity include diabetes, hypertension and sleep apnea.
4. **Is there a difference between bariatric surgery, a gastric bypass or a Roux-en-Y gastric bypass?** Bariatric surgery is a general term used to describe any surgical procedure designed to result in weight loss. There are a number of different procedures and several variations of the gastric bypass. The Roux-en-Y gastric bypass and Laparoscopic Adjustable Gastric Banding (Lap-Banding) are the only procedures covered because they have a proven track record of safety and effectiveness in the scientific literature and have demonstrated better outcomes over the long-term. A complete explanation of the different bariatric procedures and a summary of the scientific evidence that has been published about each surgery may be found on our Web site at www.regence.com/trgmedpol/surgery/sur58.html in the Medical Policy area.
5. **If I have questions about my bariatric surgery benefit, who do I call?** Contact a Regence Customer Service specialist at the number listed on of your member card.
6. **How do I start the process if I am considering bariatric surgery?** Contact the Legacy Good Samaritan Obesity Institute at (503) 413-7557, OHSU Surgical Weight Reduction Center at (503) 434-8372, or Advanced Specialty Care at 541-322-1765 or toll free 866-292-0095 to set up an information session. The Legacy Good Samaritan Obesity Institute, OHSU Surgical Weight Reduction Center and Advanced Specialty Care associated with St. Charles Medical Center are recognized as Centers of Excellence (COEs) by Regence BlueCross BlueShield of Oregon.
7. **What is a Center of Excellence (COE)?**
 - ⌚ An institution with expertise providing comprehensive, multidisciplinary long-term care for bariatric surgery patients that has met criteria as a COE through the Blue Cross and Blue Shield Association.
 - ⌚ Bariatric surgery programs become designated "centers of excellence" (COEs) if they meet specific criteria concerning, for example, the number of procedures performed per year, patient complication, survival and follow-up rates.
 - ⌚ COEs must also meet criteria related to various program components, such as patient education, staff/surgeon training and quality management.
 - ⌚ Going to a COE is important for patients because the scientific literature has documented that patient outcomes are better when they receive care from surgeons/facilities that perform a higher volume of bariatric procedures and that have specialized experience in caring for morbidly obese patients.

8. Where do I go to for bariatric-surgery related services?

Legacy Good Samaritan Obesity Institute

1040 NW 22nd Avenue, Suite 520

Portland, OR 97210

Phone: (503) 413-7557

OHSU Surgical Weight Reduction Center

3181 SW Sam Jackson Park Road, Suite 330

Portland, OR 97231

Phone: (503) 494-8372

Advanced Specialty Care /Associated with St. Charles Medical Center

2084 NE Professional Court

Bend, OR 97701

Phone: (541) 322-1765 or Toll Free 866-292-0095

Bay Area Hospital

1775 Thompson Rd

Coos Bay, OR 97420

Phone: (541) 269-8111

North Bend Medical Center (Lap Banding only)

Phone: Contact Nancy Malcom (541) 267-5151 ext 310

9. What is the bariatric surgery process at the obesity institute?

- ⌚ Patient attends an information session at the obesity institute
- ⌚ Patient completes and submits an application
- ⌚ Staff review of the application to ensure patient meets criteria, including documented weight loss of more than 5%
- ⌚ Medical benefits are verified by the institute and pre-treatment authorizations are requested from Regence
- ⌚ Medical, psychological, nutrition and physical therapy evaluations scheduled
- ⌚ Staff review of patient's test results from the previously scheduled evaluations
- ⌚ Once criteria is met, authorization for surgery is requested from Regence
- ⌚ Patient referred to a COE surgeon for consult
- ⌚ Surgery
- ⌚ Post-operative follow-up with the surgeon
- ⌚ Post-operative follow-up with obesity institute staff
- ⌚ Long-term follow-up with the surgeon and institute staff

- 10. Are other gastric-related surgeries covered?** No, even if performed at a COE. The plan will only cover the Roux-en-Y gastric bypass surgery or Laparoscopic Adjustable Gastric Banding at the Legacy Good Samaritan, OHSU COE, St. Charles Medical Center for the treatment of morbid obesity or the Bay Area Hospital and only when all criteria are met. No other surgical procedures are covered, including, but not limited to, gastric banding, adjustable gastric banding, vertical banded gastroplasty, mini-gastric bypass (gastric bypass using a Billroth II type of anastomosis), distal gastric bypass (long-limb gastric bypass), biliopancreatic bypass, and biliopancreatic bypass with duodenal switch.

11. **When did the benefit for the surgical treatment of morbid obesity become effective for PEBB employees?** January 1, 2006. We will not consider any services you obtained prior to January 1 related to weight loss as an eligible expense. However, documented weight loss prior to January 1, 2006 will be considered toward your overall weight loss goal of more than 5% over the 6 months prior to surgery.
12. **What criteria must be met for me to qualify for the Laparoscopic Adjustable Gastric Banding or the Roux-en-Y gastric bypass surgery?** According to PEBB, the following criteria must be met for the Roux-en-Y gastric bypass and Laparoscopic Adjustable Gastric Banding services to be covered by your plan:
- ⌚ BMI (Body Mass Index) more than $35\text{mg}/\text{k}^2$ with a diagnosis of diabetes; or
 - ⌚ BMI $40\text{mg}/\text{k}^2$ with any co-morbid condition; or
 - ⌚ BMI more than $50\text{mg}/\text{k}^2$ with or without co-morbid conditions
 - ⌚ A pre-surgical work-up completed that includes all of the following:
 - (1) Dietary counseling and education
 - (2) Medical evaluation
 - (3) Psychological evaluation
 - ⌚ Documented weight loss of more than 5% over the 6 months prior to surgery
 - ⌚ All pre- and post-surgical care, the gastric bypass surgery and any related complications as a result of this procedure, must be performed through the Legacy Good Samaritan, OHSU, St. Charles Medical COE or the Bay Area Hospital/North Bend Medical Center.
13. **What if I don't meet all the criteria adopted by PEBB to qualify for the Roux-en-Y gastric bypass surgery or the Laparoscopic Adjustable Gastric Banding, but I still want to have the surgery?** You will be responsible for all the charges related to the gastric bypass surgery even if the services are provided by a COE.
14. **Do I need a physician's authorization for the mental health evaluation required prior to the bariatric surgery?** Yes. A COE physician will authorize the visits needed prior to surgery.
15. **If I'm currently being treated by a physician for a mental health condition, will the bariatric surgery related mental health evaluation count as part of my current treatment plan?** No.
16. **Who needs to contact Regence about my bariatric-related services?** The COE will contact Regence to preauthorize your pre-treatment as well as your surgical procedure.
17. **Does the COE need to contact Regence to preauthorize all the services associated with the surgery separately?** No. The COE will contact Regence to obtain two preauthorizations related to the Roux-en-Y gastric bypass or the Laparoscopic Adjustable Gastric Banding – one for the pre-treatment services and one for the surgical procedure.
18. **If I live outside the Portland metropolitan area, can I see a surgeon closer to my home for bariatric surgery?** Yes, but you will be responsible for all charges related to the bariatric surgery.

19. **How many surgeons are available through the center of excellence to perform the bariatric surgery?** Three at the Oregon Weight Loss Surgery Center on the Legacy Good Samaritan campus – Emma J. Patterson, M.D., Dennis Hong, M.D., and Jay C. Jan, M.D. Four at the OHSU Surgical Weight Reduction Center – Clifford Deveney, M.D., Robert Martindale, M.D., Robert O'Rourke, M.D., and Bruce Wolfe, M.D. . One at the Bay Area Hospital and North Bend Medical Center – Steven Tersigni, M.D. Two at Advanced Speciality Care - Dr. Stephen B. Archer and Dr. Marinus H. Koning
20. **What kinds of pre-surgery tests will I be required to undergo prior to surgery?** Contact the COE directly for this information. They are the most qualified to answer your questions because they coordinate all of the testing and surgery.