

Bariatric Surgery for Internists
(summary)
Winston Gerig MD

Considering the epidemic of obesity in the United States and it's cost to society, combined with severe comorbidities (especially DMII), poor quality of life, shortened life expectancy , and loss of productivity, the medical and surgical treatment of obesity must be a priority for our health care system. Bariatric surgery provides the only durable treatment for morbid obesity and reverses or substantially lessens the comorbidities and improves the quality of life and thus should play a prominent role in our approach to the treatment of obesity. It is challenging to determine which operation should be done for an individual patient and which patients should receive surgery. Even with surgery, life style changes and life long follow up are necessary to prevent recidivism. Bariatric surgery should only be done within the context of a complete team providing medical, emotional, psychiatric, dietary and exercise support. The various surgical procedures present unique long term potential problems that must be understood by all physicians caring for a patient who has received bariatric surgery.