

What Are The Risks Of Bariatric Surgery?

All major abdominal surgeries come with risks. Some of these risks are increased in obese individuals. Our highly-trained team will do everything in their power to reduce the risk of any complications. The potential risks of bariatric surgery include but are not limited to:

- **Wound Infection**
- **Abnormal Heart Rhythm**
- **Heart Attack**
- **Bleeding**
- **Pneumonia**
- **Injury to Stomach**
- **Need for Further Surgery**
- **Pressure Ulcers**
- **Muscle Weakness/Neurologic Dysfunction**
- **Wound Hernia.** A separation of muscle under the skin which may require operative repair.
- **Pulmonary Embolus.** Blood clots that may form in the leg veins can break off and travel to the heart and lungs. In order to decrease the likelihood of blood clots, patients are given blood thinner, compression booties, and are encouraged to walk early in the post-operative period.
- **Anastomotic Leak.** The connection between the stomach and the small intestine may leak. This is rare and could be life threatening and would require surgical correction.
- **Stricture.** The narrowing of the stomach/small intestine connection to the point that food can no longer pass through easily.
- **Ulcers.** Ulcers can form at the stomach/small intestine connection. These can happen spontaneously or through the use of aspirin, tobacco, or non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs such as Advil. Ulcers can bleed or form strictures.
- **Bowel Obstruction.** This can happen early or late in the post-operative course, even months or years later. It is due to internal scarring or adhesion formation. It may require surgery to correct.
- **Anemia.** May occur due to decreased ability to absorb ingested iron. Many people need to take iron and Vitamin B12 supplements.
- **Hair Thinning or Loss.** This is usually temporary and limited to the first 12-18 months after surgery.
- **High Risk Pregnancy.** All women should avoid pregnancy for the first 2 years following surgery since this is the time of most rapid weight loss. A pregnancy during this time could result in severe maternal malnutrition, fetal malnutrition, premature birth, underweight newborns, or miscarriage.
- **Death.** The overall mortality is <1%, placing this operation on par with elective gallbladder removal or bowel surgery.