

Bariatric Patients Have High Risk of Complications

According to a new government study, 40 percent of all people who have weight loss surgery have complications within six months.

That is double the 20 percent rate of hospitalizations for the same patients prior to surgery reported the Journal of the American Medical Association.

Nearly 140,000 Americans undergo bariatric surgery each year. It may include gastric bypass - a procedure that sections off a small portion of the stomach into a pouch which fills up quickly – and laparoscopy – which uses a silicone band to restrict the stomach.

Among the findings, stated in August edition of "Medical Care," 22 percent of all bariatric patients had complications during their initial hospital stay and 18 percent returned to the emergency room or the hospital for re-admittance within six months.

“This is a complex surgery, and for a year after the surgery there will be potential complications,” said William Encinosa, a senior economist with the Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality.

On the other hand, many complications suffered by the obese patients prior to surgery are improved or eliminated.

Diabetes, hypertension, sleep apnea, and high cholesterol may no longer be problematic.

The American Society for Bariatric Surgery estimates that the average person who undergoes weight loss surgery loses and keeps off an average of 44 to 66 pounds for at least 10 years. And many more shed over a hundred pounds.