

# Health Trends

## Weight Loss Surgery Grows In Popularity

(NAPSA)—The National Institutes of Health (NIH) calls it the only proven method of achieving long-term weight loss and now tens of thousands of morbidly obese people are turning to surgery to dramatically shed the pounds and change their lives.

Forty-four-year-old surgeon Robert Marema weighed as much as 340 pounds when he decided he was a candidate for the weight loss surgery he had been performing so successfully on thousands of patients over the last few years.

"Patients were asking me, 'Hey doc, when are you going to do this yourself?'" said Dr. Marema, President, U.S. Bariatric in Florida. "I finally decided that if I wanted to see my children grow up, I needed to have the surgery."

Dr. Marema is not alone. According to the American Society of Bariatric Surgery (ASBS), between 11 and 15 million people are morbidly obese (100 pounds or more overweight) and about 75,000 of them will undergo weight-loss surgery this year. That's up from about 45,000 in 2001.

According to the ASBS and the NIH, Roux-en-Y gastric bypass is the current gold standard and the most common surgical procedure performed to treat morbid obesity.

In the procedure, the stomach is made into a small pouch, created by stapling. This restricts the amount of food a person's stomach can hold, reducing calorie and nutrient absorption and leading to dramatic weight loss.

Gastric bypass may be performed laparoscopically, through several small incisions. This method often reduces hospital stay time and post-surgical pain.

Six months after his gastric bypass surgery, the six-foot-five Dr. Marema lost about 110 pounds and in the next three months, he lost another 30 pounds. He's been able to keep his weight between

Questions to ask a weight loss surgeon from experts at [www.weightlossurgeryinfo.com](http://www.weightlossurgeryinfo.com):

1. What type of weight loss surgery procedures have you performed?
2. How many procedures have you performed?
3. Can the surgery be performed using minimally invasive techniques?
4. Which procedure is best for me? What are the risks involved?
5. What type of long-term, after-care services can you provide for me?



210 and 220 for the last several years. In addition to the pounds, the reflux disease, sleep apnea, arthritis and back pain he suffered because of his morbid obesity, have also gone away.

"The bottom line is that there are a variety of effective surgical methods people can choose from to deal with their morbid obesity," said Dr. Marema.

Dr. Marema says weight-loss surgery is a major operation and people should thoroughly research their options before making a decision. They should look for surgeons who are experienced and offer comprehensive care, including nutritional and psychological counseling, before and after the surgery. People should be encouraged to attend ongoing support groups where patients can share their experiences with each other.

One resource patients can consult is [www.weightlossurgeryinfo.com](http://www.weightlossurgeryinfo.com), a Web site that offers information about weight-loss surgery options, including an interactive questionnaire that can help determine if someone is a candidate for the surgery, as well as a way to identify experienced surgeons in their area who offer the weight-loss surgery option.