

Why Bariatric Surgery?

Bariatric surgery can be an effective tool to support people lose weight and improve their health. However, this surgery is life changing and it is important that you take time to understand the risks that can be associated with it.

This booklet is designed to give you an overview of some of the most common psychological risks associated with bariatric surgery.

Please read this booklet carefully. If there is anything you are concerned about after reading this booklet, or anything that you do not fully understand, please speak to a member of the Psychology Team. You can find details about how to contact us at the end of this booklet.



Please note that the psychological risks listed in this booklet are not exhaustive. Human behaviour is complex and it is therefore not possible to accurately predict how any individual will respond to having bariatric surgery.

Thank you for taking the time to read this booklet.

Further Information

We endeavour to provide an excellent service at all times, but should you have any concerns please, in the first instance, raise these with the Matron, Senior Nurse or Manager on duty.

If they cannot resolve your concern, please contact our Patient Experience Team on 01932 723553 or email asp-tr.patient.advice@nhs.net. If you remain concerned, the team can also advise upon how to make a formal complaint.

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The Psychology Team



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How to contact us:

By phone: 01784 884 620/621

By email: asp-tr.psychology.opt-in@nhs.net

Please note this number and email address provided are monitored Monday-Friday 9am-5pm. Please contact your GP if you require urgent support outside of these hours.

Emotional Eating

Eating in response to emotions is common; however, this can be problematic if it is your only way of coping with emotions, or if it is happening regularly enough to negatively impact your health and wellbeing.

If patterns of emotional eating are not properly addressed there is a risk that you may regain weight over time after bariatric surgery.

We offer an **Emotional Eating Workshop** designed to help people understand why they emotionally eat and develop a range of alternative ways to respond.

*To book a place on this workshop please call:
01784 884 620.*

Binge Eating

Binge eating is defined as: eating a large amount of food (more than most people would typically eat in a whole day), in a short period of time and feeling **out of control** when eating.

If you regularly binge eat please speak to a member of the psychology team.

You may also find the following books helpful:

- **Overcoming Binge Eating** by C. Fairburn
- **The Compassionate Mind Approach to Beating Overeating** by K. Goss

Night time eating

Regularly waking up in the middle of the night and eating could prevent you achieving the best possible long-term outcomes from bariatric surgery.

Please contact a member of the Bariatric Psychology Team if you wish to discuss this further.

Eating Disorders

Research shows that there is an increased risk of developing an eating disorder or patterns of disordered eating after bariatric surgery, especially for people who have experienced these difficulties in the past.

If you have ever been diagnosed with an eating disorder or have experienced any of the symptoms listed below, please contact the Psychology Team to discuss this further.

- Deliberately made yourself sick in an attempt to manage your weight or emotions
- Used laxatives in an attempt to manage your weight
- Gone for a long period of time without eating or drinking in an attempt to lose weight
- Engaged in excessive amounts of exercise in an attempt to lose weight

It is important to consider how you would feel about having excess skin and how you might cope with this if it became a difficulty post-surgery.

If you are concerned about having excess skin after bariatric surgery, and the potential impact this could have on your wellbeing, please discuss this with a member of the Psychology Team.

It could also be a good idea to come to our Support Group to meet other people who have already been through the process.

Venue: Education Centre, Ashford Hospital
Time: 18.00-20.00

Dates:

Thursday 30th January
Thursday 27th February
Thursday 26th March
Thursday 30th April
Thursday 28th May
Thursday 25th June
Thursday 30th July
Thursday 27th August
Thursday 24th September
Thursday 29th October
Thursday 26th November
Thursday 17th December

Do you have a phobia of needles?

You will need an injection to administer your anaesthetic for bariatric surgery, as well as regular blood tests to manage your health.

You will be required to self-inject an anticoagulation treatment for two weeks immediately following surgery and you may also need a vitamin B12 injection every 3 months for the rest of your life following the operation.

[We would always recommend that needle phobia is treated prior to having bariatric surgery](#)

Treatment for needle phobia usually consists of a short course of Cognitive Behavioural Therapy which you can access at your local IAPT service (see p. 6 or ask your GP if you live outside of Surrey).

Body Image Concerns and Excess Skin

One of the most common concerns people have after surgery is how they will cope with having excess skin.

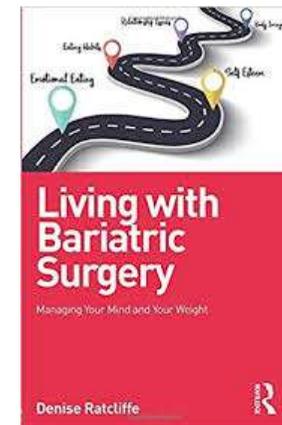
Excess skin can affect you physically (e.g. problems such as rashes, infections, ulceration, personal hygiene and mobility). It can also lead to feelings of dissatisfaction and body image concerns.

General difficulties with eating

Listed below are some other difficulties with eating that people may experience after bariatric surgery:

- Loss of enjoyment and interest in food
- Increased anxiety about eating certain foods
- Change in taste preferences, difficulty tolerating certain textures
- Missing certain foods
- Anxiety about eating out or eating in social situations
- Feeling overwhelmed by thoughts about food and eating

For more information about how to prepare for having bariatric surgery we would recommend you read 'Living with Bariatric Surgery' by Denise Ratcliffe



Mental Health

To proceed with bariatric surgery, it is important that any mental health difficulties are stable and well managed.

Bariatric surgery is a life changing procedure which can have a profound impact on a person's mental health and wellbeing.

It can be a tough journey with lots of unexpected consequences and it is essential that any mental health difficulties you might have are stable and that you are receiving good support to manage this.

To access support for your mental health please speak to your GP. Please find details of some local mental health organisations listed below:

- **Mind Matters IAPT Service: 0300 330 5450**
- **Surrey Eating Disorders Service: 01372 204 001**
- **Surrey and Borders Community Mental Health Teams:** <https://www.sabp.nhs.uk/our-services/mental-health/community-services>
- **Recovery college:** <https://www.sabp.nhs.uk/our-services/recovery/recovery-college>
- **I-access Drug and Alcohol Service Surrey: 0300 222 5932**
- **Citizens Advice Bureau: 03444 111 444**

For further information about signposting to specialist services please contact Claire Holland on: 01784 884 620.

If you are concerned about your alcohol intake or ability to abstain from drinking alcohol for 12 months following Bariatric Surgery, please speak to a member of the Bariatric Team.

The Government currently recommends that you drink no more than 14 units of alcohol per week.



Do you have a phobia of vomiting?

A phobia of vomiting (emetophobia) can put your health at serious risk after bariatric surgery as could mean you become fearful and avoid eating if you fear it could make you vomit.

We would always recommend that vomit phobia is treated prior to having bariatric surgery

Treatment for vomit phobia usually consists of a short course of Cognitive Behavioural Therapy which you can access at your local IAPT service (see p. 6 or ask your GP if you live outside of Surrey).

If it is outside of your GP's opening hours you can contact:

- **The Crisis Line** on 0800 915 4644
- **The Samaritans** on 116 123.
- Text **SHOUT** on 85258

Alternatively you can go to your **local A&E Department**.

Please note that Ashford and St Peter's Bariatric Surgery Team is not an emergency service and support is only available during working hours.

Alcohol and substance dependency

Studies indicate that there is an increased risk of developing dependency on alcohol (and other substances) after bariatric surgery. This is not necessarily in people who have been heavy drinkers prior to bariatric surgery.

You will be required to abstain from drinking any alcohol for 12 months after surgery.

As Bariatric Surgery alters your metabolism it is likely that you will become intoxicated more quickly and from drinking much smaller amounts.

Please visit www.drinkaware.co.uk for further information about government recommended guidelines for drinking alcohol.

There is a risk that bariatric surgery may negatively impact your mental health ...

Many people experience an improvement in their mental health after bariatric surgery. However, it is important to know that *this is not always the case*.

Here are some common reasons that people report a deterioration in their mental health after bariatric surgery:

- They still feel dissatisfied with their body image
- They have difficulty dealing with excess skin
- Their expectations about how life would change after surgery have not been met (e.g. they still lack confidence or experience pain)
- They are struggling to follow the recommended diet and lifestyle guidelines
- They don't have other effective ways of managing difficult thoughts and feelings and their main coping strategy of food has been taken away
- The way they feel about themselves as a person changes or it changes aspects of their relationships
- They feel more vulnerable as they receive increased attention from others
- They are struggling to cope with surgical complications or eating difficulties
- They are disappointed with the amount of weight loss achieved or with weight regain over time

- Bariatric surgery hasn't made them 'happy'.

To hear more from people who have had bariatric surgery come along to our Bariatric Support Group on the last Thursday of every month. Pick up a leaflet at reception!

Would your mental health prevent you following the necessary diet and lifestyle recommendations?

It is important to consider whether your mental health could affect your ability to follow the diet and lifestyle recommendations after bariatric surgery. These include: eating regularly, planning and preparing meals, changing eating habits and taking daily multivitamins.

If you are concerned about this, please discuss this with the Psychology Team.

Medications

Bariatric surgery *may* affect the absorption of some mental health medications and this will need to be carefully monitored by your medication provider (usually your GP or Psychiatrist).

Some mental health medications also increase appetite or impact metabolism and could therefore result in sub-optimal outcomes from bariatric surgery.

If you require further information about this please call **Frimley Park Pharmacy Medicines Information Line on 01276 526 751** or speak to a member of the Psychology Team.

Do you have difficulty swallowing tablets?

It is essential that you take daily vitamin and mineral supplements after bariatric surgery and these are usually taken in tablet form. If you don't there is a risk that you become deficient which can lead to a range of adverse health outcomes.

If you are concerned about this, please discuss this with the Psychology Team.

Self-harm and suicide

Research suggests that there is an increased risk of people engaging in self-harm or attempting to end their life after bariatric surgery, particularly for those who have experienced this prior to the surgery.

If you are currently self-harming or having thoughts about wanting to end your life it is vital that you inform the team about this to ensure you get the support you need.

If you currently feel at risk to yourself or others, please contact your GP urgently.