

Obesity and Post-Bariatric Surgery Care

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Obesity has become an endemic problem in USA. It is estimated that 75% of adults have obesity related diseases. The research in obesity lags behind the demands. There are very few options for weight loss and they often come with obvious side effects. People are frustrated with the standard care provided by medical professionals. A lot of desperate patients try all kinds of remedies with no proved benefits and unknown side effects. The standard care recommended by medical professional societies includes diet, exercise, pharmaceutical agents and bariatric surgery. The clinical data has shown that bariatric surgery is the most effective method of permanent weight loss. But patients who have had successful surgery also face a lot of new problems. The most common side effects include surgery related GI disorders and malnutrition. I will illustrate these problems by citing the following cases.

A woman in her mid thirties came to my clinic complaining of severe fatigue for the previous one year. She was diagnosed with chronic fatigue syndrome and was treated as such without any improvement. On further questioning, she told me that she had Roux-en-Y bypass about 10 years ago and lost about 150 pounds. She was doing well until 2 to 3 years ago when she started to feel fatigue easily. I did screening lab work specific for post-bariatric patients and found that she was severely anemic and malnourished with several essential nutrients. She received blood transfusion and nutrients supplements. Her fatigue was resolved.

A late thirty year old woman was referred for chronic diarrhea, abdominal pain and bloating. She started having these symptoms after her bariatric operation 5 years ago. She had extensive work-up but nothing worked for her. She was even told that she might need another operation to correct the defects created by her bariatric surgery. I did extensive work-up including upper and lower endoscopies. She was found to have blind loop syndrome, bile reflux gastritis, mal-absorption and bile salt-induced chronic diarrhea. She was treated accordingly and her symptoms resolved.

There are significant changes in GI tract and physiology related to bariatric operation. A comprehensive understanding of the bariatric surgery and post-operation GI physiology is very important for the physician caring for these patients to meet the challenge. If you have any questions about obesity treatment and post-bariatric operation care, please contact Dr. Jeff Ye, North Atlanta Medical & Digestive Care at 770-346-0900. We can help!