

Hello,

Thank you for contacting UI Obesity Surgery. Please take some time to read the enclosed information carefully. We also invite you to research our website www.uihealthcare.com/weight. If you have questions after reviewing this information please contact us at 319-356-1887 or e-mail obesitysurgery@uiowa.edu.

At UI Obesity Surgery we invest a great amount of time educating our patients regarding successful weight loss surgery. Our program emphasizes the importance of the pre-and post-operative diet and behavior modifications. We teach our patient's how to make specific behavioral changes with healthy eating and physical activity. These changes prepare the patient for surgery and instill the knowledge for life-long sustained weight loss after bariatric surgery.

If you would like to be evaluated for bariatric surgery please fill out the enclosed Severe Obesity Health Questionnaire and return it to our office. Once we receive your health questionnaire we will review it to determine eligibility for an evaluation. All applicants will be notified, within one week by mail and/or telephone, of their eligibility status.

ALL PATIENTS: If you are seeing a psychiatrist or counselor for any reason you will be asked to provide us with a letter of recommendation from them documenting your ability to comply with the diet and behavior modifications necessary for life-long sustained weight loss after bariatric surgery. (This can be done after our evaluation unless directed by us to do so prior to the evaluation.)

Unfortunately not all who apply for bariatric surgery are eligible. Bariatric surgery is considered an elective surgery based on medical necessity and is not done for cosmetic reasons. There are many factors involved to determine medical necessity. Your local doctor and your surgeon may agree that your obesity is a health risk. However, you must also meet the requirements set by your healthcare coverage provider before an approval is given.

You must have a valid form of healthcare coverage or pre-payment to be a candidate. We do not have clinical research programs to financially assist with payment for the surgery. Below are some examples of coverage criteria:

COMMERCIAL INSURANCE (such as, but not limited to, Blue Cross Blue Shield, United Health Care, Principal, Aetna, CIGNA, etc.): Coverage criteria for these plans vary and will be reviewed upon receipt of your questionnaire. We ask that you also contact your insurance carrier and ask for clarification about your specific policy for bariatric surgery. Patient is responsible for unpaid charges.

MEDICARE: UI Obesity Surgery is a Medicare approved Center of Excellence and bariatric surgery is covered when performed at a center of excellence and you meet the listed requirements:

- Have a body mass index >35;
- Have at least one severe health issue related to obesity, and
- Have been unsuccessful at previous weight loss attempts that have been documented in your medical record

You must also be compliant with the surgeon's life style changes once they have been introduced.

MEDICAID of IOWA / IOWA CARE: Please see next page for coverage criteria ...

MEDICAID - through any state other than Iowa is not accepted.

If you have Medicaid of Iowa or Iowa Care – the only difference in requirements is that Iowa Care requires a referral and Medicaid of Iowa does not.

IOWA CARE and MEDICAID of IOWA Patients:

(BEFORE an appointment can be made / show this to your primary physician and/or dietitian)

1. **Must be referred** by a physician, if you have Iowa Care and obtain an approved referral through the Care Management Program at the University of Iowa for an evaluation. Please call CMPUI at 319-353-7381 for details.
2. **Return your questionnaire** to our office so that we can determine if you are a candidate for surgery. We will respond to you within one week of receiving your questionnaire.
3. **If you are a candidate we will respond with a letter** of diet and exercise criteria to follow with your primary physician or dietitian for 6 months.
4. You will need a total of six (6) current, consecutive monthly progress notes of supervised diet and exercise documentation. This means you must be followed and counseled by your local physician and/or dietician/nutritionist for weight loss and exercise, at least, once a month for a 6-month period. Please be aware that weight loss meetings (i.e. Weight Watchers, Jenny Craig, Nutri-Systems, etc.) do not count unless your physician/dietitian/nutritionist is also monitoring and documenting your attempts monthly.
 - **Your primary care physician or a registered dietitian/nutritionist must provide us with at least 4** of the necessary 6 monthly progress notes of diet and exercise documentation. These need to be copies of the actual office visit note and can not be a summary letter unless the office note accompanies it.
Please make sure the progress notes are as detailed as possible and include:
 - a. Date of visit, current weight, and change in weight since last visit.
 - b. Verification of the specific foods and portion sizes eaten during the month (must keep a food diary for this.)
 - c. Verification of specific daily exercise routine and for how many minutes per day. (Must keep track of this in your food diary or other exercise log book.)
 - d. Suggestions on food choices and exercise for next month.
 - e. **Fax the documentation to : 319-353-6192 ATTN: Chris Melichar**
 - **If you need to start a supervised weight loss program:**
Your local doctor can see you monthly and document the attempts as listed above, or refer you to a dietitian or nutritionist.
 - You may also call UI Hospitals and Clinics Family Care Center @ 319-384-7635 or Nutrition office at 319-356-2692 to set up appointments with the dietitian.
5. **After we receive at least 4** of the necessary 6 months of diet/exercise documents we will contact you regarding an evaluation for surgery.
6. **A psychiatric evaluation will be required** and can be obtained after you are evaluated by our program unless we request you obtain one prior to being evaluated.
7. **You must be at least 25 years of age but not older than 55**. Exception can be requested if medical necessity is warranted and pt is deemed a surgical candidate by the surgeon.
8. Additional requirements may need to be met if necessary at time of evaluation.

Please contact our office if you have questions

Thank you for the opportunity to provide you this information,

UI Obesity Surgery