

The *Bariatric Beat* at Regional West

May 2025



Special Announcements

Amber Schulze Certification

We're excited to share that Bariatric Coordinator Amber Schulze, MSN, APRN, FNP-C, has earned the Certificate of Advanced Education in Obesity Medicine from the Obesity Medicine Association! This achievement strengthens our program's commitment to treating obesity as a chronic disease and enhances the expert, compassionate care we provide every patient on their weight loss journey.

Monthly Support Group

Embark on this exciting journey with our support group meeting, held on the first Wednesday of every month. Join us as we build a supportive network to celebrate successes and navigate challenges together.

Education Seminar

You can discover all you need to know about stapling bariatric procedures through our free education seminar. Dive in for a comprehensive understanding of benefits, potential risks, and the overall process. Scan the QR code at the bottom of this page or visit RWMCWeightLossOptions.com to register. Empower yourself to make informed decisions for a healthier life!

Your Weight Loss Journey Continues

Bariatric surgery is just the beginning of your transformation, and we're committed to your long-term success! Our clinical reviewer and bariatric coordinator are reaching out to past patients to provide ongoing support, celebrate your achievements, and make sure your health remains a top priority.

We'd love to hear your story, help keep you motivated, and inspire others with your journey. Your success matters, and we're here every step of the way. Stay connected, stay healthy, and let's continue this journey together!

Upcoming Events:

In-Person Support Group

June 4, 2025

5:30 to 6:30 p.m.

Regional West Medical Plaza
South, Conference Room 1

Think Twice: Is Fast Food
Truly Foe?

In-Person Support Group

July 2, 2025

5:30 to 6:30 p.m.

Regional West Medical Plaza
South, Conference Room 1

Consistency is Key: Unlock
the Secret to Lasting Health



SCAN ME

Ask the Expert

A Comprehensive and Compassionate Approach to Obesity Care

Regional West Medical Center's Bariatric Weight Loss Program proudly offers a comprehensive, compassionate approach to treating obesity as the chronic, complex disease it truly is. Our program combines the power of medical weight management (MWM) with proven surgical options to create personalized, long-term solutions for weight loss and improved health.

Whether you're just beginning your journey or seeking new tools for lasting success, our team is here to support you every step of the way with understanding, expertise, and respect. Our multidisciplinary group includes compassionate physicians and providers who recognize the emotional and physical challenges of obesity and are dedicated to helping you succeed without shame or judgment. We also offer support group sessions that foster connection, encouragement, and a sense of community among patients. For further understanding of how bariatric surgery provides treatment for obesity, check out the fact sheet from the Obesity Action Coalition (OAC).

At Regional West Medical Center's Bariatric Weight Loss Program, you're never alone; we're honored to walk this journey toward better health with you.

Warmest regards,
Amber Schulze, MSN, APRN, FNP-C, Bariatric Coordinator

Dietitian's Corner: Focusing on Nutrition

Delve into this fresh and flavorful recipe packed with heart-healthy fats, protein, and fiber.

Lemon Dill Salmon with Asparagus and Potatoes

- 2 salmon filets
- 1 bunch asparagus, trimmed
- 2 cups fingerling potatoes, halved
- 1 tablespoon olive oil
- 1 teaspoon dried dill
- Juice and zest of one lemon
- Salt and pepper to taste

Preheat the oven to 400 °F. On a lined baking sheet, toss potatoes with half of the olive oil, salt, and pepper. Roast for 15 minutes. Remove the tray, and push potatoes to the side. Add salmon and asparagus. Drizzle everything with remaining olive oil, lemon juice, zest, and sprinkle with dill. Return to the oven and bake for another 12 to 15 minutes, until salmon flakes easily.



Health Tips

Patient Awareness Statement

Many individuals face real barriers when seeking support for weight and health, such as limited access to care, high costs, and the fear of being judged. Regional West Medical Center's Bariatric Weight Loss Program understands that obesity is a complex, chronic condition, not a personal failure. Our team is here to offer compassionate, respectful, and effective care tailored to your needs. You deserve support without shame, and we're here to help.

Why it Makes Sense to Provide Treatment for Obesity through Bariatric Surgery



Reason

Evidence/Details

Obesity is widespread, deadly and expensive.

- 34% of Americans are affected by obesity¹ with 5.7% affected by severe obesity (more than 100 pounds overweight).²
- Approximately 75% of those affected by severe obesity have at least one co-morbid condition (diabetes, hypertension, sleep apnea, etc.), which significantly increases the risk of premature death.³
- Life expectancy for a 20-year-old male affected by severe obesity is 13 years shorter than a normal weight male of the same age.⁴
- Annual direct medical expenditures attributable to obesity are \$147 billion.⁵

Obesity disproportionately affects minority and poor populations.

- African-Americans are disproportionately affected by obesity. Caucasians make up 75% of the U.S. population, but only 64% of the population affected by severe obesity. In contrast, African-Americans make up 12% of the population but 23% of the population is affected by severe obesity.⁶
- Poor populations (those making less than \$20,000 annually) show a similar increase in likelihood of being affected by severe obesity.⁵

Bariatric surgery is a life-saving procedure as it is proven to increase life expectancy.

- Christou study compared those affected by severe obesity who were treated with surgery versus those who were not. It found an 89% reduction in the risk of death throughout five years in the surgery group. **In other words, those who received surgery were nine times less likely to die over the next five years.**⁷
- New England Journal of Medicine study comparing 15,000 plus individuals affected by severe obesity found a 40% lower risk of death over 7 years in surgery patients for all causes. The study found a 52% lower risk of death from obesity related illnesses including a 92% lower risk of death from diabetes.⁸

Bariatric surgery resolves potentially fatal co-morbid conditions.

- A meta-analysis study including more than 22,000 patients showed the following effects of surgery on co-morbidities:
 - ◊ Diabetes was completely resolved in 76.8% of patients.
 - ◊ High cholesterol was resolved or improved in more than 70% of patients.
 - ◊ High blood pressure was resolved in 61.7% of patients.
- Sleep apnea was resolved in 85.7% of patients.⁹
- Other studies have shown even higher (82%) resolution of diabetes¹⁰ and "profound improvement in obstructive sleep apnea."¹¹

Weight-loss post-surgery is extensive and durable.

- A long term study following patients for up to 14 years after surgery found that 89% of weight-loss was maintained.¹²

The risk-benefit tradeoff for bariatric surgery is favorable.

- The mortality rate for bariatric surgery varies by surgeon. Experienced surgeons have mortality rates ranging from .02%-5% (averaging the rate for all types of procedures).^{13,14} The risks of not receiving surgery is far higher as demonstrated by the Christou study where those who did not receive surgery were almost nine times more likely to die.¹⁵

Coverage for bariatric surgery makes economic sense.

- Downstream savings associated with bariatric surgery are estimated to offset the costs in 2 years (laparoscopic procedure) to 4 years (open procedure).¹⁶
- Post-surgery drug costs for diabetic and anti-hypertensive medications decrease dramatically. Potteiger study found a 77.3% savings.¹⁷

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Sources:

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Contact the OAC

If you have any questions regarding the above information or would like to interview an OAC representative, please contact James Zervios, OAC Director of Communications, at jzervios@obesityaction.org.