

## Why Consider Bariatric Surgery for Adolescents?



There is a lot of misunderstanding about the benefits and risks of bariatric surgery, how it works, and when to consider it. Before you decide if bariatric surgery is or isn't the right thing for your child, know the facts!

- 1 It is safe, it works and it is approved by the American Academy of Pediatrics.** Bariatric surgery is very safe. It is similar in safety risk to minor surgery. Sometimes it can cause some vitamins in the body to be too low, but vitamins are given to all patients after surgery and levels are monitored by a dietitian, so that it's not a problem.
- 2 Adolescents who have bariatric surgery can keep the weight off that they have lost.** Studies have shown that weight loss can last 10 years after surgery.
- 3 The surgery changes hormones that control weight.** The surgery works because it helps a body that carries extra weight accept weight loss by changing calorie burning and hunger hormones.
- 4 It can treat diabetes.** If a person has Type II Diabetes and has not started insulin yet, bariatric surgery allows most people to stop taking medicine for diabetes.
- 5 It can help with other medical conditions that are connected with obesity.** This surgery has been shown to help improve mood and quality of life and most of the illnesses that people with obesity have including sleep apnea, fatty liver disease, heartburn and reflux, and high blood pressure.
- 6 Help and support are part of the surgery plan.** The surgery is covered by most major insurances. The plan for surgery is supported with a medical and surgical physician, a dietitian and counselors. Your child will have ongoing support through the Maine Medical Center Weight & Wellness Program before, during and after surgery.
- 7 Sooner may be better than later.** Bariatric surgery helps people lose a great deal of their extra body weight if it is done soon enough. An adolescent could lose up to 100 pounds after surgery. Having surgery before the body stores too many fat cells can help bring the body to the healthiest place. Don't delay!
- 8 Bariatric surgery needs regular follow up.** After surgery, your child will have regular follow up visits. You and your child will learn a great deal about healthy eating, physical activity, mental health and more. Your child will need to make some changes in how they eat, but surgery can be life-changing for those that are interested and able to follow the plan.