

# Weight Loss Surgery

## What is weight loss surgery?

Weight loss surgery (also called bariatric or metabolic surgery) makes the stomach smaller and changes the hormones that signal hunger. The three most common surgeries are gastric banding, sleeve gastrectomy, and Roux-en-Y (ROO-en-Y) gastric bypass. The goal of these surgeries is for you to feel full with less food, so you eat less and lose weight.

## What is gastric banding?

A silicone band is placed around the upper part of the stomach so that less food can be eaten at once (*Drawing 1*). Your doctor can adjust the band after the surgery to control weight loss.

## What is sleeve gastrectomy?

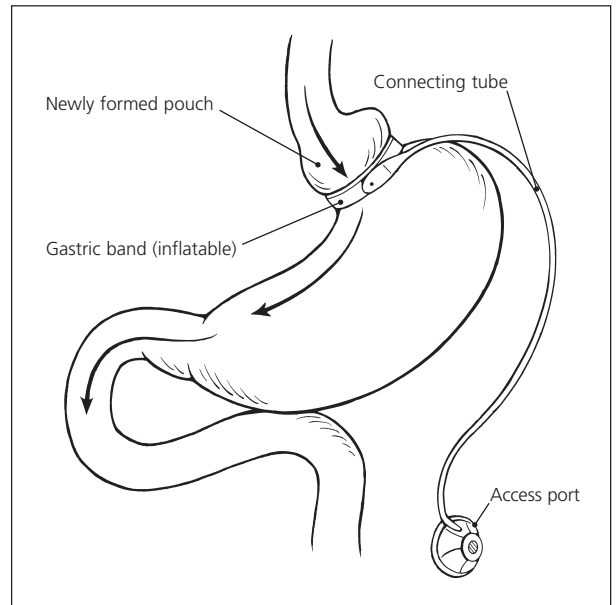
Part of the stomach is removed, creating a long tubelike structure that reduces the amount of food that can be eaten (*Drawing 2*). Hormones that signal hunger are decreased.

## What is Roux-en-Y gastric bypass?

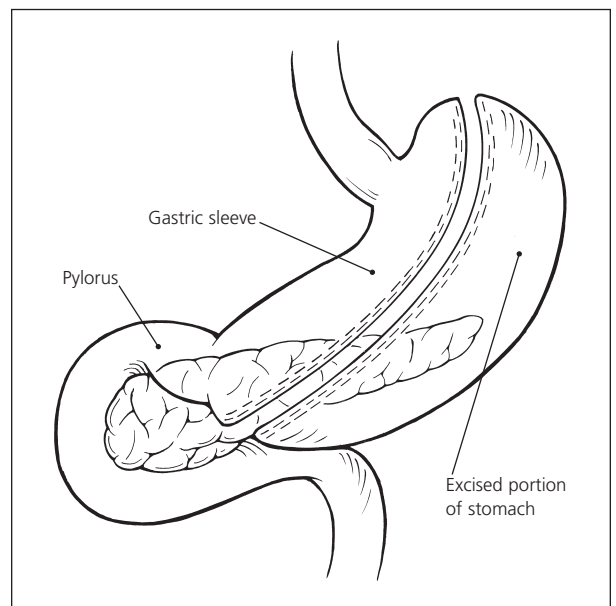
A small pouch is created so that food “skips” the rest of the stomach and some of the small intestine (*Drawing 3*). After this surgery, the stomach (pouch) is smaller, the body absorbs fewer calories from food, and hormones that signal hunger are decreased. These changes lead to weight loss.

## Who can have weight loss surgery?

People with a body mass index (BMI) of 40 or higher, or people with a BMI of 35 who have at



**Drawing 1.** Adjustable gastric banding.



**Drawing 2.** Laparoscopic sleeve gastrectomy.



# Weight Loss Surgery

(continued)

least one weight-related medical problem are usually eligible for weight loss surgery if they have not been able to lose weight in other ways.

## Will I be able to eat normal foods after the surgery?

There are strict food recommendations that need to be followed after weight loss surgery. You will never be able to eat the way you used to, but you also will not be as hungry as you used to be.

## Will my insurance pay for weight loss surgery?

Many insurance plans cover weight loss surgery. Check with your insurance provider for details about your plan.

## Where can I get more information?

Your doctor

American Society for Metabolic and Bariatric Surgery  
<http://asmbs.org/patients>

National Institutes of Health  
<http://www.nlm.nih.gov/medlineplus/weightlossurgery.html>  
<http://win.niddk.nih.gov/publications/gastric.htm>

Obesity Action Coalition  
<http://www.obesityaction.org>

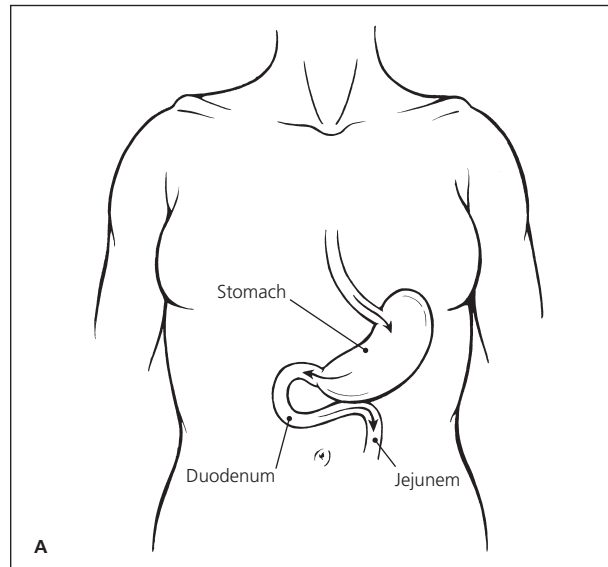


ILLUSTRATION BY KATHRYN BORN

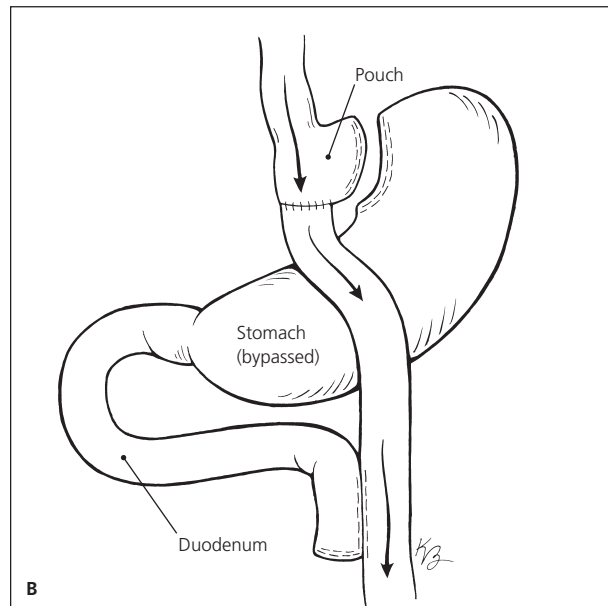


ILLUSTRATION BY KATHRYN BORN

**Drawing 3.** (A) Stomach before bariatric surgery, and (B) after Roux-en-Y gastric bypass.

January 2016

This handout was adapted with permission from Schroeder R, Garrison JM Jr, Johnson MS. Weight loss surgery [patient handout]. *Am Fam Physician*. 2011;84(7):815. <http://www.aafp.org/afp/2011/1001/p815.html>. Accessed October 15, 2015. This handout is provided to you by your family doctor and the American Academy of Family Physicians. Other health-related information is available from the AAFP online at <http://familydoctor.org>.

This information provides a general overview and may not apply to everyone. Talk to your family doctor to find out if this information applies to you and to get more information on this subject. Copyright © 2016 American Academy of Family Physicians. Individuals may photocopy this material for their own personal reference, and physicians may photocopy for use with their own patients. Written permission is required for all other uses, including electronic uses.