

# Serious Surgical Treatment for a Serious Medical Problem

Recognizing chronic obesity as a growing health risk threatening the nation, Nashville's Centennial Medical Center made plans to aggressively treat this disease from every angle. In 2000, it put together a comprehensive center to help severely overweight individuals achieve significant, sustained weight loss through a surgical procedure called gastric bypass.

"Chronic obesity is a legitimate health issue, but obese patients often do not receive appropriate medical care because their problem is considered to be an issue of willpower alone," says Debbie Thompson, R.N., Director of the Bariatric Surgery Program.

Generally, severely overweight people are not unmotivated to lose excess pounds. The reason they remain 100 or more pounds overweight is that they have not found a workable approach. "The National Institutes of Health reports that even with the best weight loss plans, about 97 percent of these men and women will regain the weight they lose, and usually add even more pounds. The NIH also goes on to state that *bariatric surgery can result in 'marked, lasting weight reduction in the majority of morbidly obese patients.'*" explains Thompson. "Gastric bypass surgery should not be considered a last resort. It's the only permanent solution to a serious health problem."

- An estimated 50 million Americans are obese.
- Obesity costs the healthcare system approximately \$130 billion per year.
- Obesity has surpassed smoking as the leading cause of preventable deaths (> 300,000 yearly).
- Common co-morbid conditions such as diabetes, hypertension and sleep apnea are either eliminated or markedly improve in most patients after bariatric surgery.
- **The National Institute of Health recommends that bariatric surgery should only be performed at facilities that have a comprehensive, multidisciplinary program.**



(Left to right) Douglas Olsen, M.D., F.A.C.S.; Debbie Thompson, R.N.; David Dyer, M.D., F.A.C.S.; Hugh Houston, M.D. F.A.C.S.

Centennial Medical Center turned to two respected Nashville surgeons to provide leading edge bariatric surgery services. Douglas Olsen, M.D., F.A.C.S. and David N. Dyer, M.D., F.A.C.S. are pioneers in the field of minimally invasive laparoscopic surgery. In 1988, Dr. Olsen became one of the first in the nation to perform laparoscopic gallbladder surgery, a technique that would rapidly revolutionize the way abdominal surgery is performed in the U.S., and taught most of the early laparoscopic surgeons. Dr. Dyer has extensive background in laparoscopic surgery, specializing in many major gastrointestinal procedures as well as access for minimally invasive spine surgery.

Drs. Olsen and Dyer were joined at the Center by Hugh Houston M.D. a fellowship-trained laparoscopic surgeon who chose to dedicate his career to bariatric surgery after witnessing firsthand the benefits it brought to suffering patients.

They perform the Roux-en-Y Gastric Bypass procedure, considered the gold standard of care. It has been producing excellent outcomes and a low complication rate for 20 years. The ability to perform this surgery laparoscopically results in less postoperative discomfort, quicker recovery and less scarring than older, open techniques.

The majority of patients can expect to achieve optimal weight loss (70-80 percent of excess body weight) between 18 and 24 months after surgery.

## Comprehensive Services Improve Outcomes

But weight loss surgery alone is not sufficient. The Center packages a wide range of services patients need. It begins with an intensive three-hour informational seminar covering the risks and expected outcomes. The program includes in-depth psychological and nutritional counseling, support groups and assistance with insurance coverage by experienced bariatric financial counselors. Immediately after surgery, patients are cared for on a dedicated floor at the Medical Center staffed by specially trained nurses who choose to work in this unit, some of whom have undergone the treatment themselves. A lifetime of follow-up care by the surgeons is an integral part of the Center's services.

**Centennial Center for the Treatment of Obesity**

THEIR STRONG HEALTH SYSTEM

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