After weight loss surgery, you may find it difficult to embrace your body and appreciate your accomplishments. Patients experience dramatic transformations that offer new challenges that may not have been anticipated. A new body image may be one of them.

After weight loss surgery, many patients state that they still see an overweight person when they look in the mirror. They can’t seem to shake the internal image of the obese person they formally were.

Not everyone is as happy with their new body as they thought they would be. They feel as though they still reside in a large body, despite significant weight loss.

The excess fat may be gone, but in its place may be saggy skin, cellulite or just simply not the body that they imaged they would have after significant weight loss.
Body Image

Body image is the picture that one has in their mind about their appearance and the attitude that forms toward their body.

It’s really hard to develop a new body image. Weight loss can be a major life change and you may need time to adjust and integrate the changes to your body.

Think of the phantom limb concept. The limb is gone, but patients still feel and experience it as if it were still there. You look in the mirror and still see someone of your former size, rather than the true reflection.

Patients who have lost and gained weight numerous times in the past, may have an even harder time and may be even less likely or have a more difficult time developing a new image of themselves. You may be waiting for the other shoe to drop, so to speak, being very afraid of regaining.

You’ve likely been reinforcing those negative images of yourself for a very long time.

There’s an assumption that the fatter you are, the worse the body image. In actuality those who are most attractive sometimes have more negative thoughts about their bodies than those with less attractive bodies, who have very little body image distress.

Positive self-talk is huge in creating a new and improved body image. Be kind, remember that what we think, affects how we feel, and in turn affects how we behave and respond.

If you are thinking negatives thoughts about your body image, you’ll feel negative feelings.

A big part of body image is in what you say to and about yourself. Remember to praise your accomplishments and enjoy your newfound improved health. Positive affirmations about your own reflection may very well help you to develop an improved new body image.

Attend support groups. Remember that these are the folks that walk in your shoes. Others may very well have had similar experiences and may be able to share techniques for developing a healthier body image.

Family and friends can be enlisted to share in your journey and provide feedback, both good and bad. They can help you to remain focused on your goal and share in your trials and triumphs along the way.

Body image is not just about how you look – it’s about how you view yourself.

Your goal isn’t necessarily to love your image in the mirror, but rather to learn to except it and to not experience distress about it that impacts your daily life.

You’ve accomplished so much and have demonstrated so much determination to get to where you are. Develop habits that will encourage you to have a better self-image. Go shopping, buy clothes that fit and feel comfortable.

**But most of all give yourself the praise that you deserve. Work on positive self-talk. Compliment your image in the mirror each and every day!**

Counseling may also be helpful in developing a positive body-image. If a poor body or self-image is getting in the way of moving forward with the new life you had imagined, consider seeking out counseling.

**Plastic Surgery:** at Group Health, plastic surgery is much like bariatric surgery, in that it must be deemed medically necessary. This means you must be getting infections under the flap of skin. This only applies to the abdominal flap and the breasts. You must see your doctor and get a prescription. Plastic surgery is not for everyone. Some are very interested in this route and some not at all. You must remember that plastic surgery, while it does remove skin it also leaves scars. It’s a big surgery, with more of a recovery than bariatric surgery.

For those not interested in this route, but want to look better and feel better in their clothes, there are many garments out there now that help to **hold things in.** Check out just about any clothing store or even Amazon for a selection to see if this is something that you are interested in.
• The Bariatric Step’s to a Healthier Future is available online. As we update the booklet, we will post the most recent version on the [http://www.ghc.org/bariatric-patients/](http://www.ghc.org/bariatric-patients/) web page. Will be updated this month.

• **Interested in a Walking Group:**

Olympia Support Group has a walking group that will meet on Tuesdays and Thursdays at Capital Lake at 6:00pm. Meet in the Marathon Park parking lot. There is also a strolling group that is a little more relaxed for those that want to take a slow walk.

The contacts are Carrie Hoesing (eyeshewawa@yahoo.com / 360-402-5556) and Charolotte McLaughlin (mackie_doodle_dandy@yahoo.com / 360-451-3443). Join the fun!!

• **Yoga Group – Returning in Sept**

William Young, PA has started a yoga group. Email Julie for more information or to sign up ([bariatricpatients@ghc.org](mailto:bariatricpatients@ghc.org)). All classes are at the Bellevue Group Health.

• **Facebook:**

Group Health bariatric Facebook page, [Second Chancers](https://www.facebook.com/groups/285256815001402/) link:

• **Pre-Op Class:**

Those approved into the program after 3-1-16 will be required to attend our in-person pre-op class. We were finding that the online pre-op education wasn’t providing the comprehensive preparation that the class did. The class is interactive and engaging. Our goal is prepare our patients that best that we can prior to surgery.

• **Consults:**

You must call/email Julie when your checklist is completed. Otherwise we won’t know that you are ready for a consult!!

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### Your Questions Answered

**Who will tell me what medications I need to stop prior to my surgery?**

This information needs to come from your surgeon. Please bring a list of your current mediations with you to your pre-op consult and review with the surgeon. Don’t be afraid to ask questions. You don’t want your surgery to get canceled because you took a medication that you were suppose to have stopped.

**I never know who I’m suppose to call with questions?**

It’s always safest to start with the bariatric nurse (Julie) with any questions in regards to surgery, both before and after. The bariatric nurse voice mail will always say if she is in the office or not. If you are having a problem that can’t wait, you can either call our General Surgery nurse (425-502-3450) or the Consulting Nurse (1-800-297-6877).

**Will Group Health be approving either of the new weight loss procedures we’ve been hearing the news?**

Not likely. Group Health looks at evidence based data over the course of a number of years. Neither of the two weight loss procedures that have been in the news have been around long enough to have that such data available.

**How will things change when Kaiser takes over?**

We don’t really have an answer to that just yet. The final approval is in the hands of the insurance commissioner at this point. Once approved, changes likely will happen over the course of time, rather than drastic changes all at once.

**How long do I need to take the vitamins and get my yearly labs?**

Forever! Please remember that it’s very important to take a daily multiple vitamin with minerals and calcium citrate with vitamin D. If you had the RNY gastric bypass, you also need to take vitamin B12 daily.

You see the bariatric team for the first 5 years. After that you can see your PCP yearly for follow up. You will get labs yearly forever. We are happy to provide a list of the labs to your PCP, so they know what needs to be followed.
Recipe of the Month

Sesame Zoodle Salad
2 medium zucchini
2 large carrots (any color)
1 small golden beet, peeled
1 watermelon radish (or any 4 oz radish)
½ cup cilantro leaves

Sesame Dressing
2 tbsp canola oil
2 tbsp rice vinegar
2 tbsp sesame seeds
1 ½ tsp sugar
1 tsp salt

Trim ends from vegetables and cut into pieces if needed, to fit into spiralizer, then crank through to create spaghetti-size coils. Tear into manageable lengths.

Mix dressing ingredients in small jar. Shake to combine.

Mix Zoodles with dressing and cilantro, in medium bowl.

Serves 6: Calories: 92, Protein: 2 grams

Program Updates

New Bariatric Nurse: It’s been decided to hire a second nurse. Having a second nurse improve pre-op case management, providing patients with more assistance in preparing for surgery and getting all of those things on the checklist completed. The new nurse will be able to assist post op patients who call with problems or concerns. She (or he), will also be trained and involved in all other areas of the program.

Julie will be working 4 days per week (with Tuesday off) and the new nurse will work 3 days per week (Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday). We look forward to adding a new team member!

New Dietitian: This might be even more exciting news. We are hiring our own dietitian. This person will take the place of seeing the Overlake Bariatric Dietitian. The cost will remain $500, though we anticipate that our patients will get a bigger bang for their buck, both pre and post op.

We appreciate these last 3 years working with Overlake Dietitians. They’ve been very accommodating. The decision to hiring our own dietitian to work out of our clinic was made for two reasons: One, it was a business decision. Group Health is working to bring back as much of our external delivery as possible. If we can do it in house, it’s better for our bottom line. Second, it’s better for our patients to have our bariatric dietitian totally integrated into our program. Patients will have better access, both pre and post op.

Pre-op patients will meet the dietitian at the pre-op class and then see her for a one hour consult, coordinated for the same day as they meet with the surgeon for their pre-op consult.

They will see her at their post op appointment, at 2 months and 6 months and on an as needed basis. All for the same $500 fee.

This is very new news. All of the details are still be ironed out. We do know that if have seen the Overlake dietitian, you will continue to see her through your 2 month follow up.

Stay tuned for other details. We want to make sure that accurate information is out there, so please do let us know if you have questions. Those who have consults in the next couple of months will still see Overlake. The change will take a bit of time.

How to Contact the Bariatric Clinic

Bariatric Nurse: 425-502-3454
General Surgery Nurse: 425-502-3450
Routine Appointments: 425-502-3450
Bariatric Team Email: bariatricpatients@ghc.org
Patient Secure Messaging: Through My Group Health
Consulting Nurse: 1-800-297-6877

Please email any medical concerns, pre or post op questions through My Group Health or call the bariatric nurse. Call the Consulting Nurse line if after 4:30 and weekends, with any post op concerns.