

## Choosing a Weight Loss Surgeon

If you are considering weight loss surgery, it is vital to locate a well-qualified surgeon that has successfully performed countless numbers of these types of surgeries. As these surgeries are increasing in popularity, more insurance companies are beginning to cover their cost. This has resulted in an influx of doctors who are willing to perform weight loss surgeries. While most of these doctors are probably well-qualified, it is important to ensure your surgery will be performed by someone extremely knowledgeable about this particular surgery.

One way to locate a good weight loss surgeon is to get recommendations. You might have family members, friends, or colleagues who have undergone the surgery. Question them about their doctors to determine which doctor they have had good experiences with. Ask if the doctor helped them with dieting questions or efforts first. Most patients are very forthcoming about their knowledge about a doctor they have used. Many people get their referral through their primary care physician.

More than likely your primary care doctor knows and can recommend a surgeon that performs weight loss surgeries. Ask your doctor for several names so you are equipped to compare various doctors' experiences and qualifications. Remember that you are not required to use the surgeon recommended by your doctor. Many times, primary care doctors will recommend another doctor based on factors other than experience or skills. They may recommend someone with whom they are friends or because they do not know anyone else.

After you have pared down your selection to a few names, you will need to verify the doctor's qualifications. The first thing you will want to ascertain is how many weight loss surgeries the doctor has performed in the past. This factor is critical. Some studies have indicated that doctors who perform only a handful of weight loss surgeries per year have higher mortality rates than those who perform many weight loss surgeries yearly. Determine how long they have been conducting the surgeries and the number they perform in an average month.

The next factor you will want to ensure is if your surgeon is board-certified. Typically a surgeon is certified by the surgical board approved by the American Board of Medical Specialties. This would indicate that the doctor has completed the required number of years of residency in their field and has taken an exam to test their knowledge. Also, find out whether the doctor is a Fellow of the American College of Surgeons.

If so, the letters, F.A.C.S. will appear printed following the doctor's name. This means that the surgeon has sat for and passed an in-depth evaluation of both their professional and ethical standards and that they come recommended. You can ask your surgeon directly whether he or she is a member or you can call the American College of Surgeons to find out. Many surgeons are also members of additional medical societies. Their goals are to support doctors and their profession. Membership in many of these requires continuing education and the societies also provide peer reviews to help maintain their high standards.

After you have decided whether or not you are considering a well-qualified surgeon, the next thing to do is to consider the location for the performance of the surgery. Will you have your surgery in a hospital or a surgery center? For how long will you be required to remain in the facility and is the staff courteous and professional? These factors can make a big difference in the success of your hospital procedure.