

# Delaying bariatric surgery until higher weight may result in poorer outcomes

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Obese patients who underwent bariatric surgery were more like to achieve a body mass index (BMI) of less than 30 one year after surgery if they had a BMI of less than 40 before surgery, according to a study published by *JAMA Surgery*.

It is estimated that more than 34 percent of adults in the United States are classified as obese, with a BMI of 30 or greater. Achieving a [body mass index](#) of less than 30 is an important goal of [bariatric surgery](#), given the increased risk for weight-related health conditions and death with a BMI above this level. Oliver A. Varban, M.D., of the University of Michigan Health Systems, Ann Arbor and colleagues conducted a study to identify predictors for achieving a BMI of less than 30 after bariatric surgery. The researchers examined data for a total of 27,320 adults who underwent bariatric surgery in Michigan between June 2006 and May 2015.

A total of 9,713 patients (36 percent) achieved a BMI of less than 30 at 1 year after bariatric surgery. A significant predictor for achieving this goal was a preoperative BMI of less than 40. Patients who had the surgical procedure of sleeve gastrectomy, gastric bypass, or duodenal switch were more likely to achieve a BMI of less than 30 compared with those who underwent adjustable gastric banding. Only 8.5 percent of patients with a BMI greater than 50 achieved a BMI of less than 30 after bariatric surgery. Patients who achieved a BMI of less than 30 had significantly higher reported rates of medication discontinuation for high cholesterol, diabetes, and [high blood pressure](#), as well as a significantly higher rate of sleep apnea remission compared with patients who did not.

A limitation of the study was that the bariatric procedures were performed in a single state.

"Patients should be counseled appropriately with respect to weight loss expectations after bariatric surgery. Furthermore, policies and practice

patterns that delay or incentivize [patients](#) to pursue bariatric [surgery](#) only once the BMI is highly elevated can result in inferior outcomes," the authors write.

**More information:** *JAMA Surgery* (2017). [DOI: 10.1001/jamasurg.2017.2348](#)

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