

BEEBE MEDICAL CENTER DESIGNATED

BARIATRIC SURGERY CENTER OF EXCELLENCE



The American Society of Metabolic and Bariatric Surgery and the Surgical Review Corporation in December 2010 designated Beebe Medical Center as a Bariatric Surgery Center of Excellence.

This designation means that Beebe Medical Center offers a sophisticated weight-loss program that includes surgical options and meets the highest standards of quality and safety as set down by the American Society of Metabolic and Bariatric Surgery. It represents Beebe Medical Center's commitment to battling obesity and associated diseases, including heart disease, diabetes, high blood pressure, high cholesterol, osteoarthritis, and sleep apnea.

"We are proud of this designation," says Jeffrey M. Fried, President and CEO of Beebe Medical Center. "Obesity has become a serious health risk in our nation today and one that leads to numerous chronic diseases. We at Beebe Medical Center are committed to improving the community's health and preventing disease, and we believe that this program offers us one more opportunity to accomplish that goal."

Board Certified surgeon Michael Sofronski, MD, FACS, heads up the program as Medical Director. He and Board Certified surgeon Daniel McCullough, MD, FACS—both with extensive experience in bariatric surgical procedures—joined forces with Beebe Medical Center to create a multidisciplinary team of physicians and clinical staff to develop the program. Combined, the two surgeons have performed more than 1,700 bariatric procedures

"We wanted to bring a quality program to Beebe," Dr. Sofronski says. "There's a lot to be said for the team approach, and there is an esprit de corps at Beebe that complements what Dr. McCullough and I do."

Drs. Sofronski and McCullough are both members of the American Society for Metabolic and Bariatric Surgery, and Diplomats of the American Board of Surgery. Dr. McCullough completed a bariatric fellowship at the University of Virginia.

Registered nurse Patty Houston, RN, MPH, MEd, is the Bariatric Program Coordinator. The program is supported by clinical specialists and patient care professionals throughout the hospital.

Michael Sofronski, MD, bariatric surgeon, in the fitness center within his office at the Beebe Health Campus, encourages exercise as part of a weight-loss program. Patients Kenneth and Pam Stenger, of Millsboro, exercise on treadmills in the background.

Patty Houston, RN, Bariatric Program Coordinator for Beebe, studies a patient record while discussing a case with Michael Sofronski, MD.



The goal is to help people lose weight, maintain their weight loss, and improve their health. The two surgical procedures offered are adjustable gastric banding and gastric bypass. Both procedures are done laparoscopically. Gastric banding patients go home the same day of surgery. Gastric bypass patients require a brief hospital stay.

“These surgical procedures assist the patient in losing weight,” Dr. Sofronski explains. “The patient must cultivate a new and healthier lifestyle.”

Dr. McCullough agrees, pointing out that patients have to make a commitment to change, and that they cannot look at either procedure as a quick fix. Patients also should consider both the risks and the benefits of these or any other surgical procedures and discuss them with the surgeon.

The program requires patients to participate in a nutrition education program and work with a personal trainer at the gym to help them individualize their exercise goals. Support groups are offered twice a month at the Beebe Health Campus. Long-term follow-up with the surgeon and supportive staff members is designed to help patients maintain their weight loss throughout their lifetime.

“This is a wonderful program for patients to assist with weight-loss efforts when traditional diet and exercise programs alone have been unsuccessful,” says Patty Houston, who is not only the program coordinator but also a gastric band patient.

For Dr. Sofronski, it is the realization of a goal that emerged when he and his wife Emily Sofronski had their daughter Camryn. As Mrs. Sofronski was working hard to get back into shape after her pregnancy, they both decided that not only would they focus on their own healthy lifestyle but would like to help others as well.

“It was an empowering experience for both of us,” he says. “We felt better and we had increased energy levels. It was the genesis of starting a bariatric practice that had a lifestyle component.”

For more information on the Beebe Medical Center Bariatric Surgical program, please call Patty Houston at 302-645-3100 x5410. ■



Dan McCullough, MD, holds the adjustable gastric band that he places around the stomach, molding it to a reduced size.

GASTRIC BANDING

A laparoscopic surgical procedure where the surgeon fastens a band around the upper stomach to create a pouch. Patients feel full after eating a lesser amount of food than in the past. Generally, the patient goes home the same day.

Benefit

Weight loss, which has been proven to improve many medical conditions

Risks include

- Injury to stomach, intestines, or other organs during surgery
- Slippage of the band
- Scarring and eventual bowel obstruction
- Gastritis, heartburn, or stomach ulcers; gallstones
- Poor nutrition
- Vomiting from eating more than your stomach pouch can hold

GASTRIC BYPASS SURGERY

A surgical procedure that makes the stomach smaller, causing the body to absorb less food. The surgeon staples the stomach in two. A part of the small intestine called the “jejunum” will be connected to the top part of the stomach (the pouch), thus “bypassing” the lower part of the stomach and the first part of the intestine. The patient has a brief hospital stay.

Benefit

Losing weight has been proven to improve many medical conditions. This surgery is considered an option when other efforts have failed and the medical need for weight loss is great.

Risks include

- Long term from weight-loss surgery
- Breakdown of the pouch, which would require another surgery
- Anemia from low iron or vitamin B12 levels
- Low calcium levels
- Gallstones
- Gastritis, heartburn, or stomach ulcers
- Poor nutrition

Source: U.S. National Institutes of Health