

Treatment is three-fold for local gastric bypass patients

SALISBURY - The Delmarva Bariatric Center has been performing gastric bypass surgeries since August 2002 and has some impressive numbers to show for it. The center has performed nearly 250 procedures to date, with women typically losing between 100 to 120 pounds and men losing typically 150 to 170 pounds their first year after gastric bypass surgery. That's about 15 tons of body fat that's been lost so far. The medical practice's director, Dr. Michael Sofronski, who is also the medical director for bariatric surgery at Peninsula Regional Medical Center, says he is dedicated to making the DBC program a model for the East Coast. The DBC received recognition recently when it was named a Center of Excellence for bariatric surgery. "Of course, operative results must compare favorably to national benchmarks, but the pre-operative evaluation and post-operative care also factor heavily when determining the suitability of a program as a Center of Excellence," said Sofronski. "Pre-operative screening and nutritional education, along with post-operative support are very important to our practice," he said. "Our support group meets weekly, and our nutritional management continues throughout the patient's first year. We also utilize our support group as an educational group. Healthy cooking classes and guest lecturers from the fitness profession, nutrition, plastic surgery and psychological services add to the comprehensive nature of our program." Sofronski also said the Delmarva Bariatric Center is intent on incorporating state-of-the-art techniques to maximize the success of its patients.



Beginning July 1, Dr. Scott Bovard, an expert in laparoscopic gastric bypass surgery, will be joining the practice. Laparoscopic gastric bypass surgery is performed with minimally invasive techniques. Small incisions are used to allow the entry of ports. Instruments are placed through these ports, and the operation proceeds with visualization on a TV monitor. Appropriate candidates for this operation can expect less pain and quicker recovery times. Bovard's "compassionate and family-oriented approach ... enhance his technical credentials," said Sofronski. "It's a fantastic opportunity to add laparoscopic gastric bypass surgery to the outstanding aftercare already offered at the Delmarva Bariatric Center," added Bovard. "Our patients now have multiple surgical options for their weight loss needs."

In addition, beginning in October, the DBC will add laparoscopic banding to its list of surgical options for obesity. This minimally invasive procedure has shown to be an effective option for those considering weight-loss surgery. Laparoscopic banding involves the placement of a smooth band around the outside of the stomach. Food passage through the stomach is restricted leading to early satiety. This overnight procedure minimizes complications and the operation works best in patients who need to lose between 50 and 100 pounds. Commitment to a structured exercise program is critical for appropriate candidates.

The DBC's new office and gym, now under construction, are being specifically designed to reflect the needs of bariatric patients. The center's new 6,000- square-foot office is being built at the East Park Professional Center on Route 50. Included in this facility is a 2,500-square-foot personal training studio and gym.

The center's aftercare program will now include exercise management with a dedicated personal trainer. According to Sofronski, the Delmarva Bariatric Center, with its existing nutritional program and support group and new aftercare program, has the comprehensive services required to optimize successful weight loss. The DBC can also offer personal advice, including free consultations, on weight loss, said Sofronski. Four of the practice's employees are also gastric bypass patients. Melinda Mattox, a registered nurse, is the program's coordinator. She had gastric bypass surgery two years ago.