



Weight loss
to improve outcomes
after routine surgery



People who are in good health recover better after an operation and have fewer complications. We want to make sure that you are as fit as possible before routine surgery.

By getting fit before an operation you can reduce the risk of a range of problems such as blood clots, wound infections and breathing problems.

Improving the outcome of your routine surgery

Obesity is a recognised risk factor in routine surgery and surgical procedures. Research shows that obese patients are more likely to experience:

- infection at the surgical site
- poor wound healing
- bleeding and blood clots in limbs and lungs
- breathing problems
- loosening, failure or dislocation of a new joint

We want you to be aware of these risks so that you can take steps to minimise them before your procedure. If you need routine surgery and your weight is significantly higher than it should be, your doctor will explain the importance of losing weight before your operation.

Even though you may feel fit and healthy at your current weight, studies show that patients with a higher body mass index (or BMI) are more likely to experience potentially serious complications both during and after routine surgery.

If you have a BMI of 30 or above we strongly recommend that you lose weight before undergoing a routine operation.

What is BMI?

Body mass index (BMI) is a calculation used by health professionals to measure body fat. It is based on your height and weight. Generally, a high BMI indicates a high level of body fat. For adults, the following BMI ranges apply:

BMI	Weight
18 to 24	Normal
25 to 29	Overweight
30 to 39	Obese
40 to 49	Morbidly Obese

Risks associated with routine surgery

While there are risks associated with every surgery, some risks are greater for patients who are obese. They are also more likely to have certain diseases and conditions that increase the risks of routine surgery. Some of the main risks are identified in the table below.

Complication	Details	Risks
Anaesthesia	<p>It's more difficult to give anaesthesia to a person who is obese.</p> <p>Complications may be due to the patient's body shape and anatomy or linked to health conditions that can affect breathing.</p>	<p>More difficulty and pain putting in needles to give medication.</p> <p>Lack of sufficient oxygen and airflow.</p> <p>Problems with getting needles in the right place for certain types of anaesthesia e.g. spinal and epidural nerve blocks.</p>
Duration of operation	<p>Operating on an obese patient can be more technically challenging so surgery can take longer.</p>	<p>The longer a person is in routine surgery, the greater the risk of complications.</p>
Complications after routine surgery	<p>An obese person is more likely to have complications after routine surgery than a person of healthy weight.</p>	<p>Bleeding. Infection. Poor wound healing. Difficulty breathing. Blood clots in the legs or lungs.</p>
Other outcomes that can be affected	<p>Joint replacement can help relieve pain and help you live a fuller, more active life. However, if you are obese you may never achieve the increased mobility and range of motion experienced by a person of healthy weight.</p>	<p>Component loosening and failure. Dislocation of the replacement joint, especially in the hip.</p> <p>In some cases, a second 'revision' surgery may be necessary to remove and replace failed implants.</p>

Make the change now

Achieving a healthier lifestyle before routine surgery will reduce the risk of complications and increase the likelihood of a successful outcome. Losing weight and reducing your BMI offers a range of other benefits including reduced cholesterol levels, lower blood pressure and a decreased risk of diabetes.

Reduce fat and calorie intake

Try to eat smaller portions at each meal and include fruits, vegetables and whole grains, lean meats, and low fat dairy. Drink plenty of water and avoid sugary drinks that are high in calories. For some people, joining a weight loss group can be more effective than trying to lose weight on their own.

Increase physical activity

If you have constant pain, you may not be as active as you were before. Low-impact activities such as swimming or cycling will put less strain on your joints but still be effective in helping you to lose weight.

Further information

For more information on losing weight visit:

NHS Choices

www.nhs/Livewell/loseweight

One You

www.nhs.uk/oneyou/weight

NHS North Kirklees CCG

www.northkirkleesccg.nhs.uk/get-health-advice

NHS Greater Huddersfield CCG

www.greaterhuddersfieldccg.nhs.uk/your-health