

## Weight-Loss Surgery "To do or not to do that is the question"

Dieting is frustrating. You eventually hit the "plateau," when your body refuses to let go of the pounds no matter how much you exercise and starve yourself. And of course, even the most cursory of research will give you conflicting views on how to get past the plateau.

There is a vast amount of information out there about fat and muscle and protein and carbohydrates and calories, and it all can make one feel very frustrated and impatient—after all, you just want to be a size six or less and you're still in the high double digits.

Which is why weight loss surgery is appealing. No longer considered cheating or the easy way out, laparoscopic gastric banding, or lap band surgery, makes your stomach smaller so you are supposed to eat less and eat more slowly, both of which help you lose weight. You will also be advised on a new way of eating, like: chew slowly, drink eight glasses of water a day, eat six small meals a day versus three big ones, don't snack between meals, avoid fatty foods and sugary drinks, and don't eat if you're not hungry.

Wait a minute, you're thinking: those guidelines are for everyone, not just lap band patients. But with surgery, you have the added worry of getting an infection, hernia or blood clot. Side effects are common for most patients, with a near one hundred percent experiencing nutritional deficiencies for years to come after the surgery. Many patients also undergo multiple operations to correct problems stemming from the first one.

Whether you choose weight loss surgery for aesthetic or health reasons, "the easy way" comes with a high price—and I'm not talking about just the doctor bill. And since you still have to change your lifestyle to learn to eat right to keep off the weight, weight loss surgery begs several questions: it is good? Is it right? Is it necessary? What am I willing to do to accept myself?