

A happier,  
healthier  
you starts  
now.



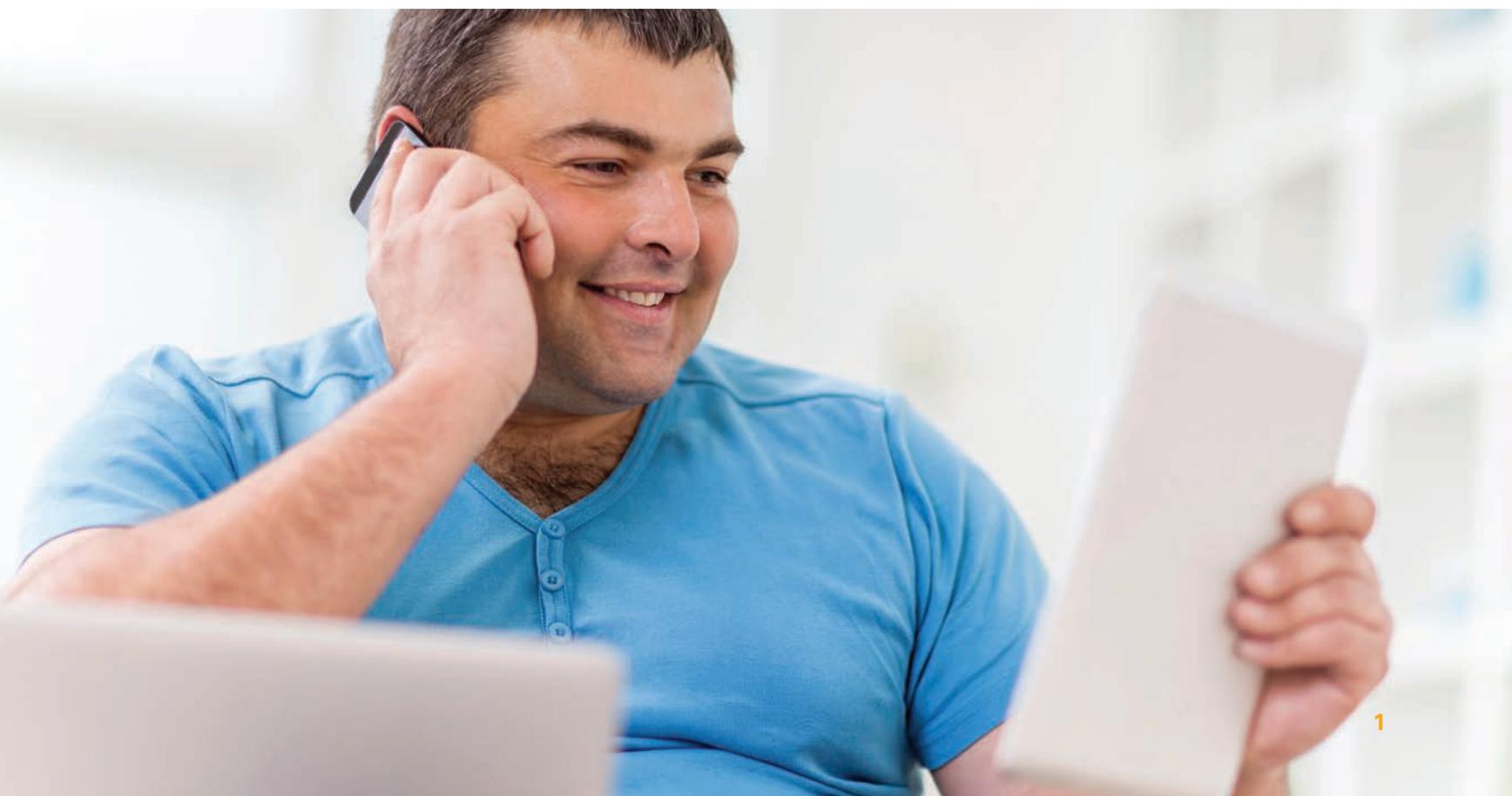
**Meet the bariatric team that  
can help change your life.**



**VCU**Health™

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# Lasting help for a constant struggle

**You're not alone. Obesity is a disease that affects more than one-third of the U.S. adult population — some 80 million Americans. Along with obesity comes a long list of health risks and personal burdens. So, it's no wonder that people suffering from obesity are constantly looking for solutions to lose the weight and keep it off. The VCU Health Surgical Weight Loss Center can offer lasting support that can help you do new and exciting things in life.**

Weight loss surgery is a very personal, life-changing journey. At VCU Health Surgical Weight Loss Center, we're committed to partnering with you before, during and after your surgery. Our experts will guide you every step of the way to make sure your weight loss process is an effective, comfortable and successful experience.

We were the first center in Virginia to perform laparoscopic gastric bypass and over the years, we have performed more than 5,000 weight loss surgeries.

Our experience and results have built a respected reputation throughout the nation, including recognition and accreditation as a Comprehensive Center by the American College of Surgeons Metabolic and Bariatric Surgery Accreditation and Quality Improvement Program (MBSAQIP) to care for adults and adolescents with clinically severe obesity. VCU Health's expert surgeons, nurse specialists, dietitians, nurse practitioners, endocrinologists and psychologists have the experience and skills to make your surgery and your journey a success. They will work to help you move through the next stage with confidence and support.



# The health burden of obesity

## Pulmonary diseases

Abnormal function  
Obstructive sleep apnea  
Hypoventilation syndrome

## Fatty liver diseases

Steatosis  
Steatohepatitis  
Cirrhosis

## Gallbladder disease

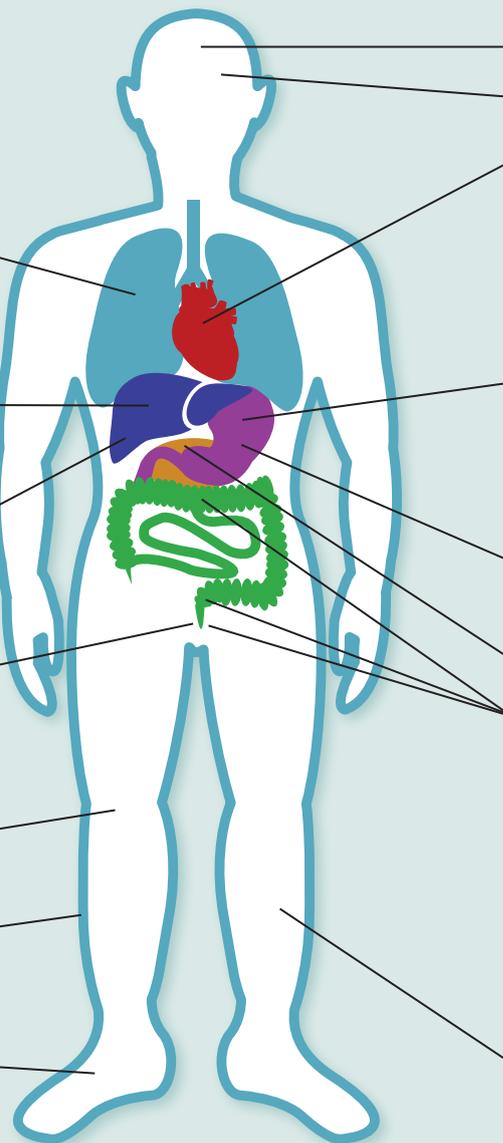
## Gynecologic abnormalities

Abnormal periods  
Infertility  
Polycystic ovarian syndrome (PCOS)

## Joint pain

## Skin problems

## Gout



## Pseudotumor cerebri

## Stroke

## Coronary artery disease Congestive heart failure

Hypertension  
Type 2 diabetes  
Dyslipidemia (abnormally high cholesterol/fat levels)

## Gastroesophageal reflux disease (GERD)

## Barrett's syndrome (esophagus injuries)

## Gastroparesis (stomach muscle weakening or paralysis)

## Pancreatitis

## Cancers

Breast  
Colon  
Esophagus  
Pancreas  
Kidney  
Prostate  
Uterus  
Cervix

## Phlebitis

Venous stasis (slow blood flow)  
Deep vein thrombosis (DVT)

## The obesity effect

The number of Americans with obesity has steadily increased since 1970. Treating this disease process is important. It contributes to a wide range of health risks and decreases the quality and length of life. The bottom line is that obesity puts a tremendous burden on both your mind and your body.

The consequences of obesity are serious — putting you at risk for more than 30 chronic health conditions including: heart disease and heart

failure, high cholesterol, hypertension, type 2 diabetes, miscarriages, asthma and other respiratory conditions, sleep apnea, GERD, incontinence and numerous cancers. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, an estimated 112,000 deaths per year are associated with obesity.

Whatever your personal reasons for wanting to lose weight may be, your overall health should rank highest on your list.

# Obesity prevention and weight loss

**The good news is that in most cases, obesity is reversible. But, losing weight and preventing weight gain can be both challenging and frustrating. You may have tried any number of popular diets or jumped in and out of various exercise regimens, all without experiencing success or lasting results.**

Reversing obesity requires changes in some lifelong acquired behaviors that are hard to break and it takes a true commitment to following a healthy lifestyle. Once you get started, the benefits can be outstanding.

## Healthy choices for a lifetime

**Managing your weight is about making good choices. This translates into choosing healthy foods, watching your caloric intake and helping your family develop healthy habits.**

A central step in being able to lose and maintain weight loss is based on your ability to eat “real food.” While healthy portion control is important, so is food choice. It is important to avoid eating processed food products with solid fats, added sugars and refined grains. Increasing the consumption of non-processed food products such as whole grains and fiber, vegetables, fruits, dairy and lean meats (fish, poultry and pork) are vital for you to be able to lose weight, maintain weight loss and improve the quality of your life. Choosing healthy foods with greater nutritional value and fiber content allows for smaller portions. You will feel fuller and satisfied longer, and these foods are easier to work off with activity.

## Get moving

Losing weight is a balancing act. You have to burn off more calories than you take in. But you don't

have to endure exercise sessions in the gym to lose or maintain your weight. You can channel your personal and family time into being active. Take a walk, jog or run with friends, ride your bike, swim laps or dance in the kitchen. Cut out TV or screen time. The idea is to get up and be moving. It's a lifestyle change that not only burns energy but also builds happiness. And it can do wonders for your personal and family life, as well as your weight.

Now is the time to take steps to lose weight and protect your health by adopting a healthier — and happier — lifestyle.

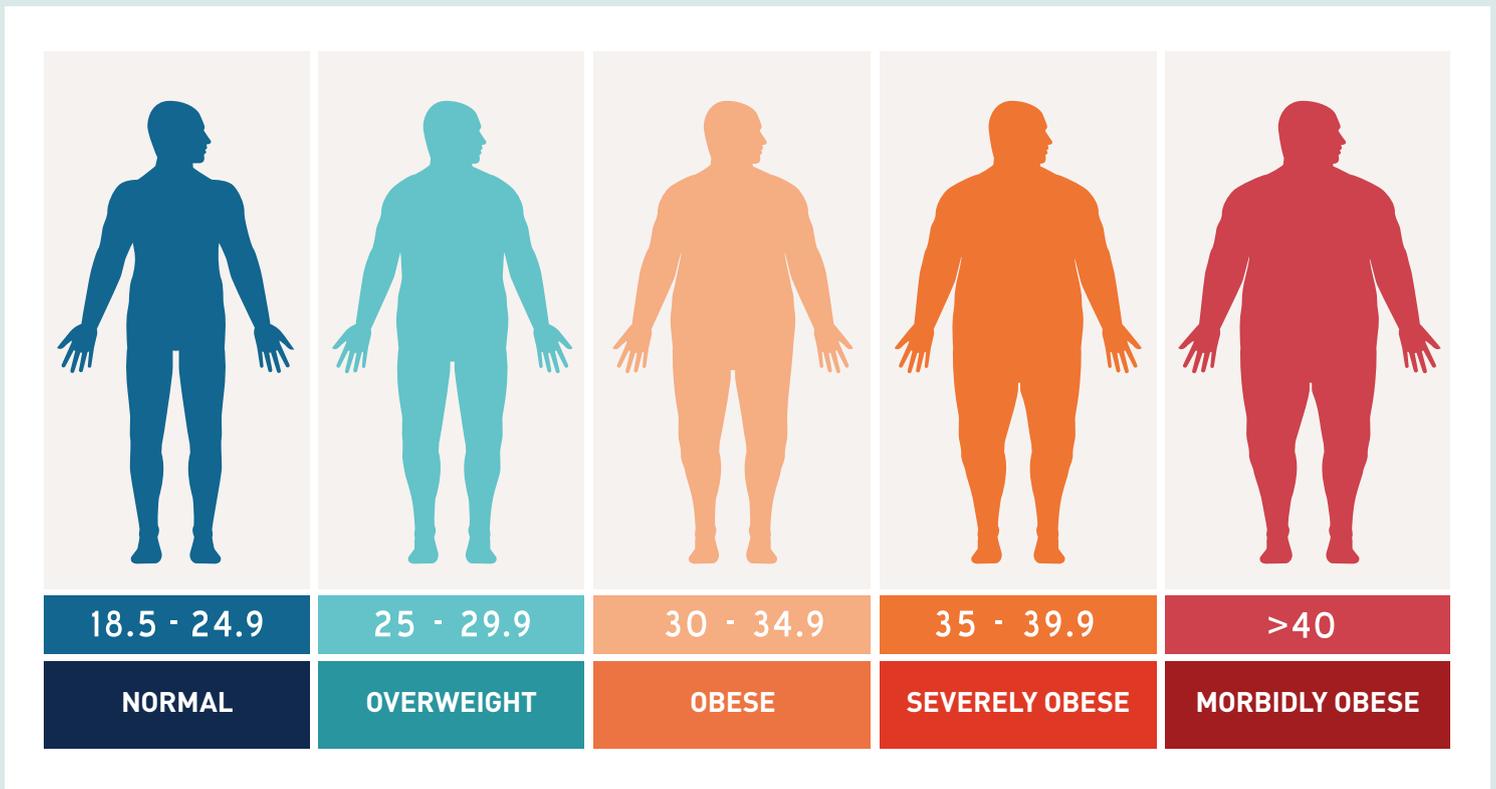
## Am I obese?

The mirror and your clothing may tell you that you look and feel overweight. But, are you obese? A scale and a simple calculation of your body mass index (BMI) are the first keys to detecting and diagnosing whether you are obese and should seek help. Most people who are worried about their weight should start with a conversation with their primary care physician.

To measure your BMI, you only need to know your height and current weight. There are many free and easy BMI calculators on the internet. Simply enter “BMI calculator” in a search engine.

Your BMI is just a rough guideline. However, a person with a BMI index of more than 30.0 is generally classified as obese. The higher the number, the higher your potential health risks.

# What is your BMI?



## How to calculate your BMI



$$\text{BMI} = \frac{\text{weight in lbs.}}{(\text{height in inches})^2} \times 703$$

EXAMPLE  
of BMI  
calculation

$$\frac{150 \text{ lbs.}}{(63 \text{ inches} \times 63 \text{ inches})} \times 703 = 26.5$$



# Am I a candidate for weight loss surgery?

**Most people who ask about weight loss surgery have tried and failed to lose weight, often many times throughout their lives, but surgery is not the answer in all cases.**

You may be a candidate for weight loss surgery if you have been unable to achieve a healthy body weight for a sustained period of time, even with medically supervised dieting and exercise and you meet any of these general criteria established by the National Institutes of Health<sup>1</sup>:

- You have a BMI of more than 40
- You are more than 100 pounds over your ideal body weight
- You have a BMI over 35 and are suffering from severe medical side effects from your obesity, such as type 2 diabetes, high blood pressure, sleep apnea or others

<sup>1</sup> <https://asmbs.org/patients/who-is-a-candidate-for-bariatric-surgery>

If you meet any of these qualifications, this may be the time to talk to your doctor and attend a seminar with the specialists at the VCU Health Surgical Weight Loss Center where you can learn about the option of weight loss surgery. The results could transform your life.

## Transforming your life

Weight loss surgery (also known as bariatric surgery) can have a lifelong effect on your health, significantly improving or resolving obesity-related health problems including diabetes.

Let the expert team at VCU Health Surgical Weight Loss Center help you decide if bariatric surgery is right for you.

According to the American College of Surgeons, patients who undergo weight loss operations at accredited bariatric surgical centers have fewer postoperative complications.



“When I gave birth to twin girls five years ago, I weighed 313 pounds. My blood pressure reading was way too high. My doctor told me if I didn’t get a grip on my hypertension, I would have a stroke by the time I was 35. I thought, ‘Oh no. I’m too young to stroke out. My mother is not going to bury me.’”

“I did research about medical procedures that could jumpstart my weight loss and motivate me toward a healthier lifestyle, which led me to the VCU Health Surgical Weight Loss Center. The team there helped me through a six-month program of dietetic and lifestyle changes. Then, on August 13, 2015, I had laparoscopic sleeve gastrectomy surgery. Today, one year later, I am 129 pounds lighter.” — Ciara Logan, patient

# How does weight loss surgery work?

Weight loss surgery reduces the size of the stomach and alters mechanisms that control hunger and some of your digestion. It also limits the amount of food you can eat and digest at one time. Most patients feel full and satisfied with eating smaller portions. These effects empower patients to lose significant amounts of weight and maintain that weight loss. With the proper guidance of our team and nutritionists, you will get the nutrition and vitamins you need for good health.

## What are my weight loss surgery options?

The right weight loss surgery for you depends on many factors, including your weight, age, medical conditions and past operations. We offer a number of weight loss surgery options, including:

- Gastric bypass: creating a small stomach pouch connected to the small intestine in a “Roux-en-Y” fashion
- Sleeve gastrectomy: creating a smaller stomach by removing the outer portion of your stomach
- Revisions to a previous weight loss surgery (such as an adjustable Lap-Band® surgery)

## How much weight can I expect to lose?

Your doctor will talk to you about what you can expect to lose after surgery as well as your follow-up care and lifestyle changes. After gastric bypass surgery, the average patient loses 60 percent of his or her extra weight. An average of 40-50 percent is expected after sleeve gastrectomy.

## What are the potential benefits and risks of the surgery?

More than 30 chronic health conditions have been linked to obesity. Weight loss surgery with postsurgery lifestyle changes can greatly reduce weight; improve your longevity and quality of life; and reduce your risk of many weight-related conditions including cardiovascular disease and cancer. As you reduce the burden of the extra weight your body bears, you reduce your vulnerability to these often disabling and sometimes deadly health conditions.

As with any surgery, there are risks of complications during weight loss surgery such as bleeding, reactions to anesthesia, cardiac events and problems caused by blood clots. Postsurgery complications due to

“I researched several programs in the Richmond area. I was impressed with the holistic model that VCU has. All aspects of my health (mental and physical) are cared for by this team.

“This surgery has changed my life in ways that I could not have imagined. Not only did I change physically with the weight loss, but I also have enjoyed new experiences that were not possible for me as an obese person. Most importantly, I have become an advocate for weight loss surgery and the positive ways it can impact a person’s life.

“At 10+ years post-op, I still appreciate everything in my life that is made easier by being at a healthier weight. I cherish every 5K or 10K event that I can walk, I enjoy exploring new places when I travel with my family, and I love discovering new foods that are delicious and weight-loss friendly. I have not regretted having the surgery for one moment.” — Mary DeCosta, patient





weight loss surgery primarily relate to the body's reaction to the reduced size of the stomach. This is why we put such a strong emphasis on your nutritionist's guidance and follow-up care. During consultations, our doctors will thoroughly discuss the benefits and risks of your surgery with you.

### Why choose the VCU Health Surgical Weight Loss Center?

VCU Health is a pioneer in the development of weight loss surgery and continues to serve at the forefront of the field, having performed thousands of successful surgeries.

We offer skilled experts and guidance, including board-certified surgeons with specialized

training and extensive experience as well as a multidisciplinary team of experts for your follow-up care. This team allows us to meet your needs on every level, from your medical care and lifestyle coaching to follow-up care. We pride ourselves on patient satisfaction. VCU Health Surgical Weight Loss Center is accredited as a Comprehensive Center by the American College of Surgeons Metabolic and Bariatric Surgery Accreditation and Quality Improvement Program (MBSAQIP) to care for adults and adolescents with clinically severe obesity.

VCU Health is also recognized nationally for a variety of important medical advances and the highest level of clinical care and expertise, providing patients with the most advanced treatments and medical technology available today.



*Pictured left to right: Natasha Clingempeel, MSN, BSN, RN; Gretchen Aquilina, MD; Guilherme M. Rocha Campos, MD, PhD, FACS, FASMBS; Jennifer L. Salluzzo, MD.*

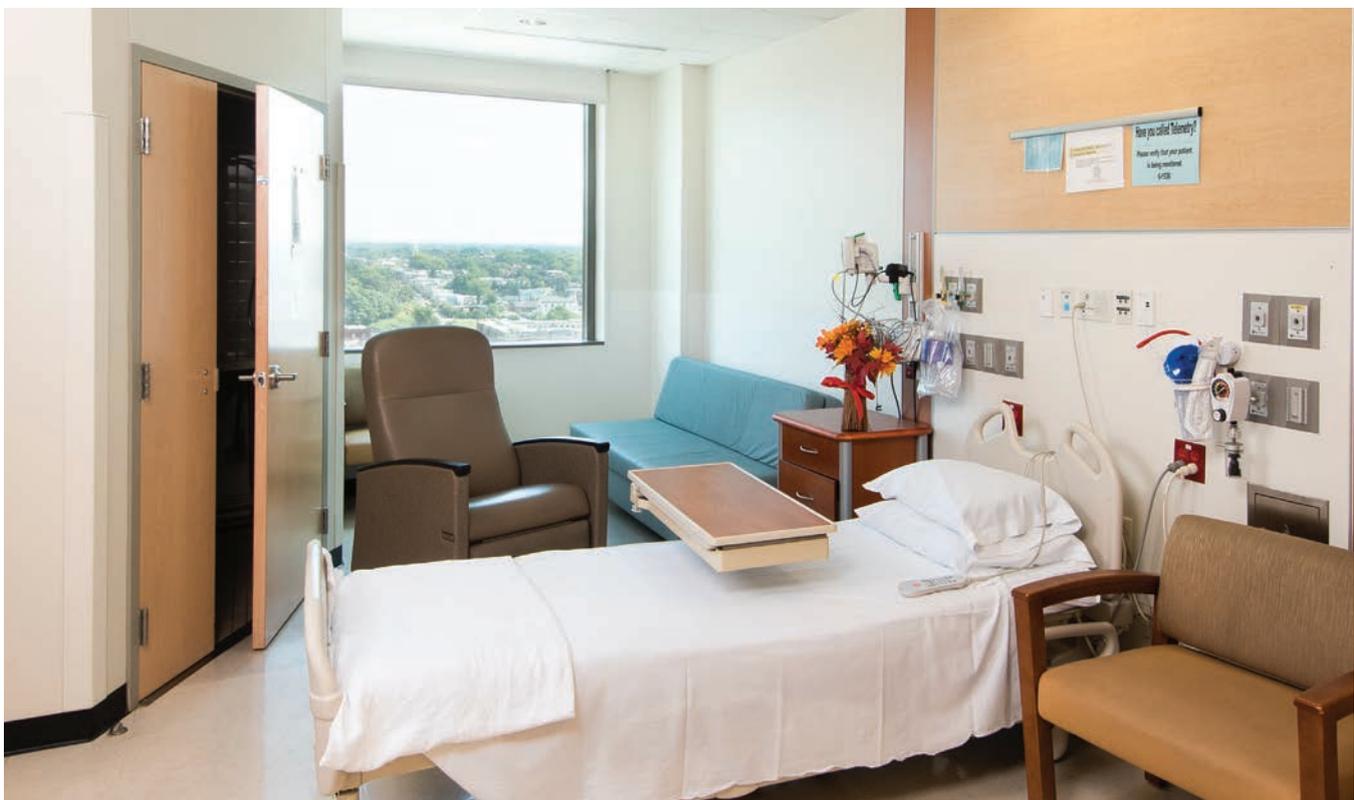
## The right team can change your life

The expert surgeons at the VCU Health Surgical Weight Loss Center lead a multidisciplinary team of specialists, therapists and consultants, concentrating on your physical, nutritional and emotional well-being and success before, during and after your surgery.

## Private rooms for your comfort

Your personal comfort is among our highest priorities. You will spend your hospital stay in one of the private rooms in our dedicated, state-of-the-art bariatric facility inside VCU Health's new Critical Care Hospital. Your care and support teams come to you to ensure the best possible patient experience.

You can receive your pre-surgical and follow-up care and services at the Weight Loss Surgery Center at our Stony Point facility, as well as our downtown campus and Chesterfield location.



# What does weight loss surgery cost?



Most insurance companies recognize obesity as a serious health issue and will cover the procedure, any complications and follow-up appointments. However, insurance companies differ, so you will need to talk to your insurance provider for your specific policy coverage. Our program director will file with your insurance provider prior to your first appointment and will notify you if your health insurance will not cover the cost. We also offer very competitive self-pay plans (see our insurance information flyer in the back of this brochure for more details).

## What's my next step?

The key to successful weight loss surgery is education. The more you know about this

life-altering procedure, the more you'll understand how your new lifestyle can transform you.

The first step is to attend one of our FREE seminars at one of two convenient locations — downtown campus and Stony Point. You will have an opportunity to meet a bariatric surgeon, ask questions and learn the following:

- Risks and benefits of surgery
- Health problems associated with obesity
- Types of surgery offered

**To reserve a seat at an introductory seminar, call (804) 827-0045 or email [helpforobesity@vcuhealth.org](mailto:helpforobesity@vcuhealth.org). Walk-ins are welcome. We offer the option of an online educational program. Call to learn more.**



"I chose VCU Health because the surgeons and their team are true professionals and they exude caring and sensitivity. There is simply no other hospital to even consider. VCU simply has the best doctors. Simply the best.

"Now, I can hike the Appalachian Trail with the Potomac Appalachian Trail Club, lift weights and be optimistic that I will meet a compatible woman. I can do three-minute planks at the gym."

— Art Bykonen, patient

# A new beginning starts here



You're not alone. Our New Beginnings support group is open to all potential and current weight loss surgery patients and their families. Meetings provide an opportunity to discuss weight loss and lifestyle issues, and to ask questions and gather important insights about weight loss surgery. Guest speakers include VCU Health bariatric surgeons, plastic surgeons, dietitians, eating disorder specialists, psychologists, exercise physiologists and nurses as well as patients just like you.

Join us for an open invitation to all meetings, gatherings and parties; restaurant discounts; and all the valuable information and articles in our monthly newsletter.

**For times, dates and locations of New Beginnings support group meetings, please call (804) 827-0045 or email [helpforobesity@vcuhealth.org](mailto:helpforobesity@vcuhealth.org).**

"I personally chose VCU Health because of their extremely high ratings for a hospital, including high rates of success among their previous weight loss patients. But the best part about working with the bariatric team at VCU Health was the sensitive attitude demonstrated towards me and the other patients. The doctors, nurses and office staff all had a positive approach that relieved my fears of the stigma associated with obesity.

"How has this surgery changed my life? The real question is: What in my life didn't the surgery change? It is apparent to all my family, friends and coworkers that I am much healthier — mentally, physically and spiritually. Since having my surgery, I have participated in local marathons, obtained my career goal of starting and running my own business and served with my church's mission programs in other countries."

— Stephanie Rogers, patient



## Contact us

Call (804) 827-0045 or email [helpforobesity@vcuhealth.org](mailto:helpforobesity@vcuhealth.org) to make an appointment.

## Locations

### Stony Point Campus

Stony Point 9109  
9109 Stony Point Drive  
Richmond, VA 23235

### MCV Campus

Ambulatory Care Center (ACC)  
417 North 11<sup>th</sup> Street, 3<sup>rd</sup> Floor  
Richmond, VA 23219

## Accreditations

VCU Health's Surgical Weight Loss Center is accredited by the Metabolic and Bariatric Surgery Accreditation and Quality Improvement Program (MBSAQIP). A bariatric surgical center achieves accreditation following a rigorous review process during which it proves that it can maintain certain physical resources, human resources and standards of practice.

