

YOUR PSYCHOLOGICAL EVALUATION

All information included in this packet has been designed to help you through the process of getting your psychological evaluation and to explain why this part of our program is required.

A few important notes:

1. The psychological evaluation is **not** required for your first office visit.
2. Your psychological evaluation **IS REQUIRED** for our program. Typically, we cannot submit for insurance approval without your psychological evaluation.
3. Please make your appointment with **ONLY** a licensed psychologist or psychiatrist. We cannot accept counselors, social workers or nurse practitioners, unless approved by your surgeon and allowed by your insurance.
4. You are responsible for making your initial psychological evaluation appointment.
5. We **STRONGLY SUGGEST** that you begin this process as quickly as possible. Typically, the faster this is completed, the faster you can have surgery.
6. For your convenience, we have enclosed a list of practitioners who have done evaluations for our clinic before. Please note: we do not require you to go to any of these practitioners. You may see anyone who meets the above criteria and is able to complete an evaluation specifically related to psychological fitness for bariatric surgery.
7. We have included in this packet the evaluation forms that the licensed psychologist or psychiatrist should use as reference when completing your evaluation. You will need to take these forms with you to your appointment. A complete evaluation and consultation report is required. A simple letter stating that you have been cleared for surgery is unacceptable.
8. Please be aware that it may take some time for the evaluation to be scheduled and for the licensed psychologist or psychiatrist to complete and send your evaluation to our office. Once it is complete, please have it sent to us as soon as possible.

IF YOU HAVE QUESTIONS, PLEASE CONTACT US AT 618-988-6171

INSURANCE & SCHEDULING PROCEDURES

PRE-OPERATIVE PSYCHOLOGICAL ASSESSMENT FOR BARIATRIC SURGERY PATIENTS

Pre-surgical psychological assessment is a standard requirement before patients undergo bariatric surgery. Nearly all insurance companies require a psychological evaluation before they will authorize surgery. Unfortunately, insurance companies are very inconsistent about how they cover the pre-surgical psychological assessment.

Although the psychological assessment by a psychologist is not required because of existing or suspected mental/behavioral problems, the mental/behavioral department of your medical insurance will likely authorize and pay for the psychological evaluation. Certain insurance carriers will not pay for a pre-surgical psychological evaluation. In the event that your insurance policy does not allow coverage for this evaluation, please be aware that payment for your evaluation will be expected at the time of service.

The doctor providing this assessment should have office staff to help identify your insurance coverage for this assessment. You may ask them to help you with this; however, it is critical that you take the steps required of you, including obtaining pre-authorization for the assessment or arranging for payment at the time of service.

PLEASE GIVE A COPY OF THE GUIDELINES INCLUDED WITH THIS PACKET TO YOUR PROVIDER

Please note: Some providers may require a referral prior to scheduling your evaluation. Our office is unable to provide this referral until after you have completed your initial consultation with your surgeon. Your primary care physician may be willing to issue this referral for you prior to your consultation in our office.

PSYCHOLOGICAL EVALUATION INFORMATION

Please find a list of psychological providers who are available to do psychological evaluations, pre-operative psychotherapy, and follow-up psychotherapy. All have had experience with bariatric patients and the bariatric assessment procedure. However, each provider is unique in how they perform their evaluation and what they charge for their services. You may want to ask questions about the amount of time needed to complete the evaluation and what the normal or typical fee is associated with the service. Also, if there are other providers you would like to complete your evaluation and do not find his/her name listed, please phone New Life Weight Loss Center to ensure that your evaluation will meet the requirements of the program.

Gordon Plumb, PhD, PsyD
Monika Plumb, LCPC, PhD
800 West Main
Carbondale, IL 62901
Tel: 618-529-2273
Fax: 618-549-8321

Poorva Talapatra, LCPC**
Shawnee Health Care
400 South Lewis Lane
Carbondale, IL 62901
Tel: 618-519-9200
Fax: 618-519-9961

Naeem Qureshi, MD
Southern Illinois Psychiatry
112 Airway Drive
Marion, Illinois 62959
Tel: 618-998-0888
Fax: 618-993-1808

Frank Kosmicki, PhD, PsyD
231 West Main, Ste 1W
Carbondale, IL 62901
Tel: 618-203-6730
Fax: 618-529-3171

Centerstone **
Marion Office:
3111 Williamson County Parkway
Marion, IL 62959
Tel: 618-997-5336

***Medicaid patients can be seen
by Dr. Qureshi at:*
Anna Rural Health
513 N Main Street
Anna, IL 62906
Tel: 618-833-4471
Fax: 618-833-7959

Lydia A Williams, PhD
Integrity Clinical Network
4230 Lincolnshire Drive, Ste E
Mt. Vernon, IL 62864
Tel: 618-242-4205
Fax: 618-242-4209

Carbondale Office:
2311 S Illinois Avenue
Carbondale, IL 62901
Tel: 618-457-6703

**NOTE: Dr Qureshi's offices
require that we send a
referral before they will
schedule patients. We
cannot send the referral until
after your initial visit with the
surgeon. Please let our staff
know if you would like a
referral to this provider.**

**** Accepts Patients with
Commercial Insurance,
Medicare and Medicaid
Coverage**

Dear Licensed Psychologist or Psychiatrist:

New Life Weight Loss Center requires that all potential patients seeking weight loss surgery complete a bariatric psychological screening evaluation. These evaluations must be done by a licensed psychologist or psychiatrist, unless an alternate provider is approved by the surgeon and meets the patient's insurance requirements.

As no standard evaluation tool exists for bariatric screening evaluations, we would like to make the following recommendations regarding the interview process to help focus on those issues we commonly see as pitfalls to success in weight loss surgery patients. We would like you to address these particular issues in your interview process.

- Reporting or displaying of adverse psychiatric conditions that might contraindicate surgery such as severe depression, severe neurosis, or severe behavioral eating disorders. These conditions should not be active at the time of the evaluation. Controlled condition, even those on medications, are acceptable and should be documented.
- The patient should be able to describe the physical aspects of the procedure and be able to have an active discussion regarding the long- and short-term risks and benefits of the operation. They should also be able to outline realistic expectations regarding post-operative plans, recovery and outcomes. If they are unable to do this, it is important that we know this from your evaluation.
- Assessment should be given to the support systems of the patient. Are adequate support systems in place in order to help the patient through the recovery process? Any barriers to adequate support, or the patient's unwillingness to seek therapy as a result of issues that occur from weight loss should be noted.
- The patient should also be able to verbalize negative outcomes associated with non-compliance with the program. A history of medical non-compliance should also be assessed, addressed, and documented as appropriate.
- The patient should also be able to verbalize that weight loss surgery will likely not improve issues such as negative body image and diminished self esteem. Education should be given on behaviors that are commonly experienced that may benefit from additional psychological assistance in the post-operative period.

While the ultimate responsibility for weight loss surgery rests in our hands and those of the patient, your recommendations for the patient's success are critical. In this evaluation report, we must see from you, in writing, one of the following statements:

- ***Clearance from psychiatric evaluation for surgical weight loss.***
- ***Clearance from psychiatric evaluation for surgical weight loss with recommendations: Include recommendations and follow-up plan.***
- ***The patient will need to be reevaluated before psychiatric clearance is given for the surgical evaluation. The patient must complete the following recommendations before the reevaluation can occur: Include recommendations and follow-up plan/reevaluation schedule.***
- ***The patient is NOT given psychiatric clearance for surgical evaluation for the following reasons or concerns:***

Please support your recommendations with documentation from the interview and evaluation. A dictated report is appreciated as opposed to hand-written notes. Common recommendations for patients that we see include mandatory attendance in bariatric support groups, additional therapy sessions to work on specific issues that may affect the patient's success, letters from primary care physicians noting the patient's compliance with medical therapies, completion of a relapse prevention plan, etc.

Our office requires a full evaluation. Reports received that contain only a few sentences and state "the patient is cleared for bariatric surgery" will not be accepted. Also, reports that include only scoring from the evaluation of standardized tests will not be accepted.