



# SPOTLIGHT

## Losing weight as a way to improve patient health

### BARIATRICS & MANAGED WEIGHT REDUCTION

Whether it is a surgical procedure or medically managed weight loss program, everything is in one place and guided by caring experts.

#### Our Team

**Denise Murphy, MD, FACS**

Medical Director and General Surgeon

**Winston Gerig, MD, FACS**

General Surgeon

**Kathleen Meier, RNC, MSN, ANP**

Bariatrics Program Coordinator and Nurse Practitioner

**Allyson Mast, MS, RDN, LD**

Registered Dietitian

**Leanne Martin, ACSM-CEP**

Fitness Trainer

## Helping patients succeed at losing weight and improving their health

From bariatric surgery to non-surgical options, there are more choices than ever to help patients lose weight. And, while having more energy is positive in and of itself – in many cases, losing weight has reversed other health conditions like high blood pressure, sleep apnea, high cholesterol – and even type 2 diabetes.

Consequences of obesity may include heart disease, diabetes and high blood pressure – as well as stroke, cancer and liver disease, even sleep apnea and gynecological problems. To help people lose weight, Goshen Physician's Center for Weight Reduction works to develop personalized plans for patients.

### What patients would be good candidates to refer to the center?

According to Kathy Meier, NP, the center's bariatrics program coordinator, "The center can serve any patient who is open to working on wellness, specifically as it relates to weight reduction. Primarily, we're focused on patients whose body mass indices are greater than 25 ... we have individuals in the weight reduction program who want to lose 20, 50 or even more than 100 pounds. It's all about achieving a level of wellness that can often change their lives."

Even though bariatric surgery no longer has negative stigma and has achieved widespread acceptance in the healthcare community, Kathy notes that surgery should always be the last option. It is far better for a patient to lose weight through better eating habits and nutrition, and fitness training than invasive surgery. For this reason, there are strict guidelines patients must meet before qualifying for bariatric surgery.

The criteria established by the National Institutes of Health requires that bariatric surgery candidates have a five-year history of obesity. That means a BMI of 40 or more with 100 pounds of excess weight or a BMI of 35 with one or two comorbid conditions such as high blood pressure, acid reflux, sleep apnea or type 2 diabetes.

"In addition, patients must show a history of having tried to lose weight through Weight Watchers or similar programs, diets, calorie restrictions and the like," Kathy says. "It doesn't necessarily mean that patients were unable to lose some pounds, but that they have not successfully maintained that weight loss. And these attempts must be validated through medical charts or the patient's own documents.

## The needs of the patient will determine surgery options

The bariatric surgery procedures performed at Goshen Health are gastric bypass and sleeve gastrectomy. Dr. Denise Murphy is a general surgeon and the medical director of Center for Weight Reduction. She says decisions about appropriate surgical options depend on the specifics of the case and involve educating the patient thoroughly.

“For example, some patients may think a gastric sleeve is a good option. But if they have uncontrolled gastric reflux, that would not be suitable. There are distinct advantages and disadvantages to each of the leading surgery options to be taken into account in the context of the patient’s situation.”

Both Dr. Murphy and Kathy say the center’s success rate in treating obesity without surgery can be a powerful motivator for all patients struggling to keep their weight under control. And success in that endeavor takes the right team and the right plan. The team includes not only the patient and his or

her PCP, but also program managers like Kathy, the surgical team and the dietitian and fitness instructors at the center. It is very much a collaborative effort. Each patient is thoroughly evaluated and then a plan is specifically crafted to best serve that patient’s situation.

## Timing is everything: Having the weight loss talk with patients

Some healthcare providers may find it challenging to talk to their patients about losing weight. Sometimes time with the patient is too limited – or the patient may not seem receptive to having the conversation. But Kathy believes timing is everything when it comes to addressing the consequences of obesity – and the valuable benefits of weight loss.

“I seldom encounter patients who don’t fundamentally know they have a problem,” she said. “Sadly, there is a lot of shame associated with obesity. But inevitably there is a tipping point where patients know the time is right to address the issue head on. When family doctors pick up on their patients’ cues, a positive dialogue can begin – a dialogue that can be truly life-changing.”



**Dr. Lisa A. Orn**  
Goshen Physicians Osteopathic Family Clinic | Nappanee

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*I have had very good patient experiences with CWR. First of all, they usually call the patient and get the process going quickly. The patients have appreciated knowing, up front, what is covered and what is not. This includes patients who are interested in surgical options and those who are interested in medically managed weight loss.*

*Once the process is started, the support provided is fantastic. Patients often comment on the non-judgmental way they are treated. This is the biggest deal to our overweight patients.*

*To start the conversation, I just ask patients if they are interested in getting help with their weight loss. I also was quite overweight in the past, so I am sure that helps (if a patient knew me then).*

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## Nutritional expertise at Goshen Health

Across Goshen Health, in addition to primary care providers, Community Wellness and the Center for Weight Reduction, we have these resources to help patients with their nutritional needs:

**Goshen Hospital Nutrition Therapy** – works with patients across a range of dietary needs including weight management, diabetes, prediabetes, fatty liver disease/NASH, celiac disease and other disorders of the stomach and intestine, heart and vascular conditions, food allergies and eating disorders.

**Goshen Hospital Diabetes Education** – works with patients and their families newly diagnosed with – or at risk for – diabetes.

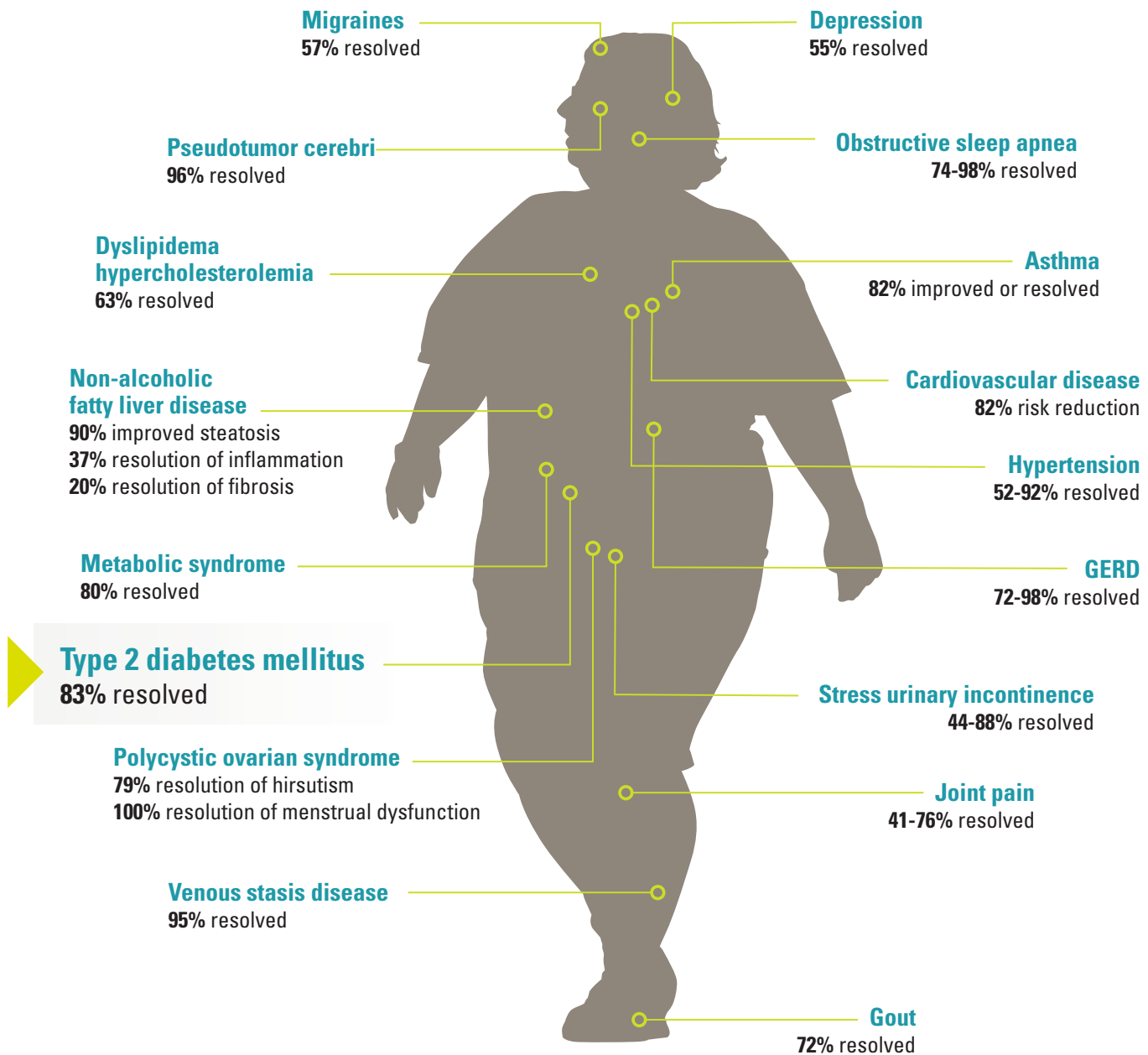
**Goshen Heart & Vascular Center** – works with patients who have a diagnosis of heart or vascular disease. Includes nutritional counseling in traditional cardiac rehab program as well as in the intensive Ornish Lifestyle Medicine.

**Goshen Center for Cancer Care** – works with patients’ nutritional needs as part of their integrative program to maximize their health and treatment benefits.

# Losing weight can reverse chronic conditions

“Too often the focus is on managing symptoms or learning to ‘live with’ obesity-related ailments,” Dr. Murphy says. “Sure, we can help you live with diabetes, but we would rather help you live well without diabetes. With the proper treatment, diabetes can actually be reversed. Sleep apnea can be reversed. Hypertension can be reversed. All of these problems and more can be addressed with the right weight reduction program. And not only will patients have a better quality of life, they often can eliminate the need for costly medications.”

Goshen Physicians Center for Weight Reduction offers every patient the support of a team of dedicated professionals – working alongside primary care providers – to help patients achieve better health through weight loss.



▶ **95% of patients**  
have improved quality of life

▶ **89% reduction**  
in 5 year mortality



## Losing weight as a way to improve patient health

*Information for healthcare providers*



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**Dr. Denise Murphy**  
Medical Director and General Surgeon

### TO REFER A PATIENT

Goshen Physicians Center for Weight Reduction provides holistic, complete care for patients. To refer a patient, call (574) 537-8326.