

841-pound woman dies of heart attack

March 6 2007

The woman who is believed to be the largest ever to have gastric bypass surgery, at 841 pounds, died of a massive heart attack in Houston, Texas.

Renee Williams had undergone the surgery, which has become a popular treatment for morbid obesity, on Feb. 20 and was thought to be progressing well until she suffered the sudden heart attack Sunday, the Houston Chronicle reported Monday.

More than 140,000 gastric bypass surgeries are expected to be performed this year.

The procedure was once frowned upon by mainstream doctors, because it makes the stomach smaller and bypasses part of the small intestine. The result is a patient who feels full more quickly, has less of an appetite and absorbs fewer calories.

The risk is usually small, but it is higher when performed on people with a body mass index between 35 and 60.

Williams' BMI was 137.5.

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