

# Waiting times too long for bariatric surgery

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Obesity is now acknowledged as a chronic disease with a number of related complications, and its prevalence has reached alarming epidemic proportions. While bariatric surgery is effective at treating the disease, access to this procedure is still too limited in Canada. The latest article published by Dr. Nicolas Christou, of the McGill University Health Centre (MUHC), in the June issue of the *Canadian Journal of Surgery* assesses the waiting times for this procedure.

According to the study, the average waiting time for bariatric [surgery](#) in Canada is 5 years, a timeframe that is long compared with the 8-week average for cancer surgery or the 18-month average for cosmetic surgery. Yet many studies have shown that this type of procedure reduces the risk of death over 5 years from 40% to 85%: bariatric surgery can therefore save lives.

"Waiting times for bariatric surgery in Canada are much too long," Dr. Christou stated. "However, the provincial government's recent announcement of additional money for our speciality is a positive and beneficial step. This funding will help us address our main obstacle, a lack of resources, and therefore represents real hope for our patients."

This investment should also have positive spinoffs in the medium-term for the [health care system](#). Another article recently published by Dr. Christou in the *World Journal of Surgery* showed that bariatric surgery is the only treatment that ensures major and lasting weight loss. It can also significantly improve the long-term health of these patients by reducing their risk of developing obesity-related complications, such as diabetes,

cancer, or heart and respiratory diseases. The costs to the health care system to treat these related pathologies would therefore decrease, and the initial investment would lead to savings within 3 years.

Source: McGill University Health Centre ([news](#) : [web](#))

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