

Sexual function dramatically improves in women following bariatric surgery, study finds

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The first study to look extensively at sexual function in women who underwent bariatric surgery found that significant improvements in overall sexual function, most reproductive hormones and in psychological status were maintained over two years following surgery. Women reporting the poorest quality of sexual function prior to surgery saw the most dramatic improvements one year after surgery, on par with women who reported the highest quality of sexual function prior to surgery. The new report by researchers with the Perelman School of Medicine at the University of Pennsylvania appears in the November 4 edition of *JAMA Surgery*.

More than half of [women](#) who seek bariatric [surgery](#) report signs of sexual dysfunction and, consequentially, psychological stress.

"For many people, sex is an important part of quality of life. The massive weight losses typically seen following [bariatric surgery](#) are associated with significant improvements in quality of life," said the study's lead author David Sarwer, PhD, professor of Psychology in Psychiatry and Surgery in the Perelman School of Medicine at the University of Pennsylvania. "This is one of the first studies to show that women also experience improvements in their sexual functioning and satisfaction, as well as significant improvements in their reproductive hormones."

Researchers followed 106 women with an average Body Mass Index of 44.5 who underwent bariatric surgery (85 had gastric bypass and 21 had gastric banding procedures). Following surgery, the women lost an average of 32.7 percent of their original body weight after the first year, and 33.5 percent at the end of the second year.

Two years after surgery, women reported significant improvements across all categories of sexual function, sex hormones and quality of life.

- Improvements were seen in overall sexual function as well as specific areas of [sexual function](#) including desire, arousal, lubrication, and overall satisfaction.
- There were significant improvements in all hormone levels of interest, which may impact both sexual behavior as well as fertility. While the study did not look directly at the correlation between surgically induced weight loss and reproductive status, they did find indirect evidence that there may be a potential impact, based on improvements in fertility-related hormone levels.
- Women reported improvements in all domains of health and weight-related quality of life, as well as improvements in body image, depressive symptoms and relationship satisfaction.

Provided by University of Pennsylvania School of Medicine

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