

Weight-loss surgery alone won't keep the pounds off

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(HealthDay)—If you think your battle against obesity ends on the

operating table, you're mistaken.

"Exercise and eating smaller portions have to be part of your [lifestyle change](#) in order to be successful" after weight-loss surgery, said Dr. Ann Rogers, director of Surgical Weight Loss at Penn State Medical Center, in Hershey, Pa.

It's also important to keep a detailed [food journal](#), she added.

"It's unbelievably helpful at getting people back on track because it forces them to be accountable," Rogers said in a Penn State news release.

Patients must also keep all follow-up appointments with their doctor.

"There's a lot of evidence that people who see their doctor regularly after surgery do better," Rogers said.

Some people are afraid of potential complications from weight-loss surgery, but for most, Rogers said, "it's safer than choosing to live their lives as obese."

Doctors usually recommend patients try different types of diet and exercise for at least five years before considering weight-loss surgery. They should also have at least one serious weight-related health problem, such as diabetes, or a [body mass index](#) (BMI) of 35 or greater. BMI is a rough estimate of a person's body fat based on height and weight.

"Most of our patients have tried diet and exercise for their whole lives," Rogers said. "Yet a lot of them have still been overweight or obese since middle school."

Some people don't qualify for [weight-loss surgery](#), including those with

an untreatable medical problem that causes them to gain weight and those with poorly controlled [mental health disorders](#).

More information: The U.S. National Institute of Diabetes and Digestive and Kidney Diseases has more on [weight-loss surgery](#).

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