

SURGERY FOR MORBID OBESITY

ISSUE DATE: November 9, 1982
AUTHORITY: [32 CFR 199.4\(e\)\(15\)](#)

I. CPT¹ PROCEDURE CODES

43644, 43770 - 43774, 43842, 43846, 43848

II. HCPCS PROCEDURE CODE

S2083

III. DESCRIPTION

Morbid obesity means the body weight is 100 pounds over ideal weight for height and bone structure, according to the most current Metropolitan Life Table, and such weight is in association with severe medical conditions known to have higher mortality rates in association with morbid obesity; or, the body weight is 200% or more of ideal weight for height and bone structure.

IV. POLICY

A. Gastric bypass, gastric stapling or gastroplasty, to include vertical banded gastroplasty is covered when one of the following conditions is met:

1. The patient is 100 pounds over the ideal weight for height and bone structure and has one of these associated medical conditions: diabetes mellitus, hypertension, cholecystitis, narcolepsy, Pickwickian syndrome (and other severe respiratory diseases), hypothalamic disorders and severe arthritis of the weight-bearing joints.

2. The patient is 200% or more of the ideal weight for height and bone structure. An associated medical condition is not required for this category.

3. The patient has had an intestinal bypass or other surgery for obesity and, because of complications, requires a second surgery (a takedown).

B. In determining the ideal body weight for morbid obesity using the Metropolitan Life Table, contractors must apply 100 pounds (or 200%) to both the lower and higher end of the

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weight range. Payment will be allowed when beneficiaries meet all requirements for morbid obesity surgery including the ideal weight within the newly determined range.

V. EXCEPTIONS

A. Benefits for adjustments to the gastric banding device by injection or aspiration of saline, including any adjustment-related complications, shall be allowed for patients who underwent the LAP-Band surgery before the effective date of coverage only if the patient criteria discussed in paragraph IV.A. were met or would have been met at the time of surgery.

NOTE: TRICARE will not cost-share any complication resulting from the initial surgery, including band-related complications, for those patients who surgeries were performed prior to the effective date of coverage. If, however, a complication results from a separate medical condition, benefits shall be allowed for the otherwise covered treatment. A separate medical condition exists when it causes a systemic effect, or occurs in a different body system from the noncovered treatment.

B. Documentation must be submitted that gives the patient's history and shows that the patient met or would have met the criteria for the morbid obesity benefit at the time of surgery. The contractor shall conduct a medical review to assure compliance with paragraph IV.A. Where necessary, additional clinical documentation shall be obtained as part of this review.

VI. EXCLUSIONS

A. Nonsurgical treatment of obesity, morbid obesity, dietary control or weight reduction.

B. Biliopancreatic bypass (jejunoileal bypass, Scopinaro procedure) for treatment of morbid obesity is unproven (CPT² procedure codes 43645, 43845, 43847, or 43633).

C. Gastric bubble or balloon for treatment of morbid obesity is unproven.

D. Gastric wrapping/open gastric banding (CPT² procedure code 43843) for treatment of morbid obesity is unproven.

E. Unlisted CPT² procedure codes 43659 (laparoscopy procedure, stomach); 43999 (open procedure, stomach); and 49329 (laparoscopy procedure, abdomen, peritoneum, and omentum) for gastric bypass procedures.

VII. EFFECTIVE DATES

A. Laparoscopic surgical procedure for gastric bypass and gastric stapling (gastroplasty), including vertical banded gastroplasty are covered, effective December 2, 2004.

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TRICARE POLICY MANUAL 6010.54-M, AUGUST 1, 2002

CHAPTER 4, SECTION 13.2

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B. Laparoscopic adjustable gastric banding is covered, effective February 1, 2007.

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