



Paying for Bariatric Surgery

Getting Started

If you're thinking about having bariatric weight loss surgery, the cost of the procedure and follow-up care is an important consideration. The following guide covers some of the payment options that might be available to you.

Remember, you're not alone. In addition to providing you with the best possible care, we will be at your side to answer all your questions, including those around costs. We're here to help you make this important decision, and to get you on the path to a healthier, more rewarding life.

A variety of options exist to help pay for bariatric surgery including:

- Individual or employer sponsored medical insurance coverage
- Private Financing
- Self Pay



Your life is our life's work.



Medical Insurance

Most patients offset their bariatric surgery costs with help from their medical insurance coverage. While you're still likely to have some out-of-pocket costs, medical insurance can be a big help in making bariatric surgery possible.

Many consumers do not know if their medical insurance covers bariatric services, but coverage has expanded in recent years. Many major insurance providers offer coverage for certain bariatric procedures to beneficiaries who have a body mass index (BMI) of 35 or higher; have one or more associated co-morbidities such as diabetes mellitus, obstructive sleep apnea, hypertension, coronary artery disease or osteoarthritis; and have been previously unsuccessful with medical treatment for obesity.

Some Mercy Bariatric Centers participate in financing programs that help insured patients spread their out-of-pocket surgical expenses out over time. Program participants must meet eligibility criteria, and have no outstanding balances with Mercy. Ask the Bariatric Program Coordinator if you are eligible for this program, so you can make an informed decision.

Private Financing

Financing bariatric surgery can also be an option if you need help paying out-of-pocket costs such as deductibles or co-pays. You may wish to explore the following options if you need private financing:

Family or Friends

Patients often find support from family members or friends who wish to help them on their journey towards better health.

Life Insurance

The main purpose of life insurance is to provide a benefit when you die. But a form of life insurance called “permanent” life insurance may offer benefits while you’re alive. One of those benefits is the accumulation of a “cash value” that can be borrowed against. If you already have permanent life insurance, this may be an option for financing bariatric surgery. Check with your insurance agent or policy underwriter to see if you qualify.

Health Savings Account (HSA)

Health savings accounts (HSAs) are like personal savings accounts, but the money in them is used to pay for qualified health care expenses. You — not your employer or insurance company — own and control the money in your HSA. You don’t pay taxes on money going into your HSA. Any unused money at the end of the year rolls over (stays in your account) to the next year. To be eligible to open an HSA, you must have a special type of health insurance called a high-deductible plan and must not be enrolled in Medicare. Check with your employer’s HR Office or health plan administrator to see if you qualify. If not, eligible persons can start an account through a bank or other financial institution.

Flexible Spending Accounts (FSA)

A health care flexible spending account (FSA) is a pre-tax benefit account used to pay for eligible medical, dental, and vision care expenses that aren’t covered by your insurance plan. An FSA can help you save money by paying for qualified medical expenses before income taxes are deducted. Check with your employer or HR office to see if they offer an FSA, to verify your eligibility for using the account for bariatric surgery and to explain your documentation responsibilities.

Retirement Plan Loans

Generally speaking, you should not withdraw your retirement savings as you will most likely need these funds to maintain your current lifestyle during retirement. However, some patients feel the health benefits of bariatric surgery warrant consideration of this option. After you crunch the numbers and compare interest rates and long-term costs (and potential lost retirement earnings), you may discover that this is the best option for you.

To learn whether you qualify for a retirement plan loan, contact your HR department or your retirement plan provider to find out whether your plan allows for loans or hardship withdrawals. Hardship withdrawals allow you to take out money from your retirement plan for unreimbursed medical expenses for you, your spouse or your dependents. Be sure to ask about penalties and consider the income tax implications of your decision.

Secured Medical Loan

A secured medical loan is a loan from a bank or credit union that you pay back with some sort of collateral. If you don’t pay the loan back, the financial institution has a right to take ownership of whatever collateral you used.

Direct Lenders & Credit Cards (Unsecured Loans)

Unlike secured loans, unsecured loans allow you to borrow money without putting up any collateral. The trade off comes in the form of an interest rate that you pay back to the lender over the term of your loan. You may wish to approach your local bank or financial institution to see if they have medical financing options that fit your needs.

Self Pay

Mercy offers competitive self-pay pricing to help people without insurance coverage. Check with your Bariatric Coordinator to learn more.

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