

Docs perform bariatric surgery on 180-kg teen

IRREVERSIBLE Procedure, known as a sleeve gastrectomy, involved removing 75% of her stomach

HT Correspondent

hmetro@hindustantimes.com

MUMBAI: A 19-year-old girl, who weighed 180 kg, underwent a sleeve gastrectomy procedure, a form of bariatric surgery, in a Malad hospital on Thursday.

The patient, who is a non-resident Indian, flew to Mumbai from Nairobi for the procedure, which involved removing about 75% of her stomach and sealing the ends with surgical staples. The smaller stomach is about the size of a banana, and therefore limits the amount of food one can eat by making one feel full after eating a small quantity of food. It is an irreversible procedure.

Dr Abhay Agarwal, who performed the surgery at Agarwal Hospital, Malad (east), said that the patient was the heaviest teenager he has operated on.

Abida Rehman, the patient (name changed to protect her identity), is a college student. She had gained 10 to 15 kg every year from the age of 12. "She tried walking four km every day, to lose weight, but had no control over her eating habits. She had an eating disorder. She would never feel full after eating and would even dream of food," said Dr Agarwal.

Rehman's body mass index (BMI) is 70. The BMI of a healthy person ranges from 18 to 25.

Rehman's aunt, Rubina, who accompanied her to India, is taking care of her. Rehman's father, who was obese, died five years ago. Many of her older relatives

SLEEVE GASTRECTOMY

Sleeve gastrectomy is a kind of bariatric surgery done to help with weight loss.

The surgery limits the amount of food you can eat by making you feel full after eating a small amount of food.

In the first year after the surgery, the patient has to take food supplements.

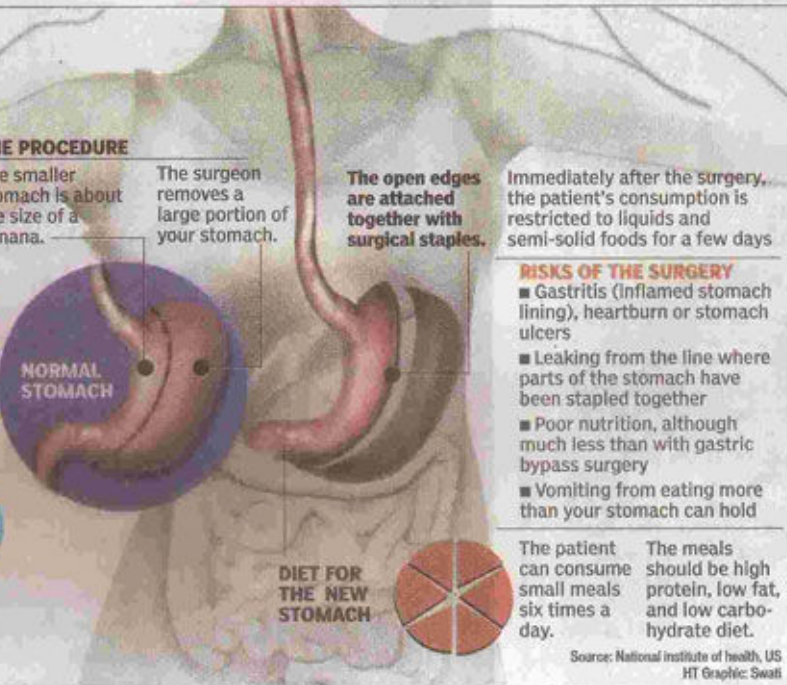
Losing enough weight after surgery can improve many medical conditions such as asthma, Type 2 diabetes, arthritis, high blood pressure, obstructive sleep apnoea, high cholesterol, and gastroesophageal disease.

THE PROCEDURE

The smaller stomach is about the size of a banana.

The surgeon removes a large portion of your stomach.

The open edges are attached together with surgical staples.



Immediately after the surgery, the patient's consumption is restricted to liquids and semi-solid foods for a few days

RISKS OF THE SURGERY

- Gastritis (inflamed stomach lining), heartburn or stomach ulcers
- Leaking from the line where parts of the stomach have been stapled together
- Poor nutrition, although much less than with gastric bypass surgery
- Vomiting from eating more than your stomach can hold

The patient can consume small meals six times a day.

The meals should be high protein, low fat, and low carbohydrate diet.

Source: National Institute of Health, US
HT Graphic: Swati

and friends have undergone bariatric surgery with the same doctor and have lost weight after the surgery.

"Abida has seen them lose weight. She also wanted to undergo the surgery," said Rubina.

Dr Agarwal said that Rehman was depressed due to her obesity and had no friends. "She was also constantly teased by her peers," he added.

Rubina said that Rehman did not undergo any consistent psy-

She is the heaviest teenager I have operated on. She was depressed due to her obesity and had no friends. She was constantly teased by her peers.

DR ABHAY AGARWAL
surgeon, Agarwal Hospital

chiatric or psychological counselling before undergoing the surgery. "She did go to a psy-

She went to a psychotherapist when she was 14 years old, but was not comfortable with it. She was miserable. We wanted her to live a good life.

RUBINA,
the patient's aunt.

chotherapist when she was about 14 years old. But she was not comfortable with it," said

Rubina.

Dr Agarwal said that he was in touch with Rehman's psychotherapist from Nairobi.

"The girl was motivated to undergo the surgery. She said she could not control her hunger," he said.

"Before the surgery, Dr Agarwal counselled her and told her that in sleeve gastrectomy, malnutrition would not be an issue. She knows that it is a life-altering surgery," said Rubina.

'YOUNG PATIENTS SHOULD GET COUNSELLING'

MUMBAI: City doctors are divided on whether a 19-year-old patient should opt for a life-altering bariatric surgery. The "quick-fix" surgery leads to life-long limitations on diet and lifestyle.

Doctors said that such a surgery should be a last recourse if other efforts to control one's weight such as dieting and exercising do not work.

"It is very important to get pre-operative and post-operative counselling in case of young patients. The person should not feel that he is taking a short cut. This is a long-term commitment. They will have to follow certain food guidelines all their lives," said Dr Raman Goel, a bariatric surgeon at Bombay Hospital.

Obesity consultant Dr Girish Gadkari said that several obese young patients have managed to lose weight with diet and exercise. "A 16-year old patient, who weighed 178 kg, managed to lose about 80 kg with diet and exercise. Though being that obese is risky, I do feel that the patient should make concrete efforts to lose weight before going under the knife," said Dr Gadkari.

"I have dealt with stubborn patients. I sent them to counsellors and it has worked."

- MENAKA RAO