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**F**or many of us, reducing weight is not just a thought. It has become an urgent need. A lazy lifestyle coupled with unhealthy eating habits has led us cross the boundary of being overweight to becoming obese. If you think this sounds far fetched, consider this: According to the National Family Health Survey of India, approximately five per cent of India's population is obese. That's more than 5 million people. If you walk down the memory lane, you would come to a view that you see more overweight people today than a decade ago. This is a side effect of prosperity, pressure in everyday life and paucity of time for maintaining ones health.

A thin line separates being fat and overweight and being obese. A normal person's body mass index (BMI) is usually between 18 to 25 per cent. If your BMI is in the range of 25 to 30, you are overweight. And if it exceeds 30, you are medically termed Morbidly Obese.

The World Health Organisation has already termed obesity as a disease of epidemic proportions. "It is a slow creeping killer whose seriousness we refuse to accept unlike say the fashionable current scare of swine flu," says Dr Abhay Agrawal, a renowned Bariatric Surgeon who runs the Bariatric unit at the prestigious Asian Heart Institute. Obesity leads to hypertension, diabetes, heart ailments, joint problems, and sleep disorders. In a nutshell you live shorter and suffer more.

If you talk to people suffering from obesity you would realize that just recourse to diet control and exercises is often only temporarily successful. Weight management for an obese individual is a complex issue that requires various levels of education, behavioral modification and surgical intervention.

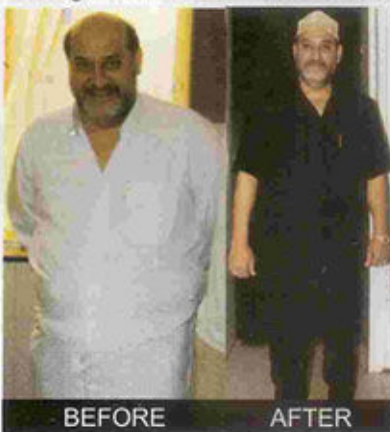
Bariatric surgery, a treatment option for those having morbid obesity, is increasingly becoming a popular and preferred choice. The surgery helps you loose weight by altering your body's food consumption and absorption. Hospitals and specialized clinics in India are increasingly starting to offer bariatric surgery to not just Indians but also to a wide spectrum of foreign medical visitors.

It took a less than happy personal incident for Dr Abhay Agrawal to convince himself of the need to don the gloves to tackle obesity through

surgery. "I saw a middle aged lady who was grossly obese, bed ridden, diabetic and half blind from diabetic retinopathy. Conventional medical management could not save her," reminisces Dr Abhay Agrawal. That convinced him and renowned surgeon Dr J B Agrawal, to set up the Center for Obesity Control at Agrawal Clinic, Malad, Mumbai.

Surgical procedures for obesity can now be safely performed by laparoscopic approach. Patients suffering from morbid obesity stand to benefit tremendously by laparoscopic surgery thus decreasing the hospital stay, minimizing pain and an early return to activity.

52 year old Ahmed Ibrahim Bora, a resident of Dar-e-Salaam, faced the dilemma that most morbidly obese people come to terms with. Weighing 132 kgs and a diabetic, life was becoming an increasing challenge for him. Dieting didn't work. He decided to go for a Sleeve Gastrectomy surgery. After a two hour surgery, he had almost halved his weight to an astounding 76 kilos in 10 months! "One year later I am feeling like a 25 year old!" says Bora with a smile. But that was not all. Bora found to his delight three months later, that his blood



**BEFORE AFTER**

sugar levels were almost normal.

Laparoscopic Gastric Bypass and Sleeve surgeries have emerged as highly popular and successful surgeries for morbid obesity. The Gastric Balloon is a also very popular among the foreign tourists because of the simplicity and effectiveness of the procedure. It can be helpful to patients who are looking for weighloss without surgery. The patient feels full after just few bites of food thus decreasing his food intake and this results in weight loss. The procedure is safe and effective. It can be done as a short stay procedure (hospitalization for 24 to 48 hours). It is a very patient friendly procedure with tiny cuts on the abdominal wall and hence has an excellent cosmetic result.

Zohreen, a 36-year-old mother of two from

## *Solving a weighty issue...*

**How many times have you looked at yourself, sighed, and muttered with guilt, "I must reduce my weight!"**



**BEFORE AFTER**

Kenya, weighing 156 kgs was unable to take care of her young children and was severely depressed in life. After trying out numerous remedies she finally turned to Bariatric surgery. Today having lost 70 kgs after a Gastric Bypass she not only looks young but also feels it. She grins and says, "I am very happy with my new image and feel I have taken a rebirth"

Removing the obesity tag is not just a matter of surgery. It needs a tremendous amount of expertise both in the pre and the post surgery period. Apart from a good bariatric surgeon, you need to have a management team that comprises of a nutritionist, endocrinologist, physician, physiotherapist, and a counselor. This is one of the reasons why the Center for Obesity Control at Agrawal Clinic Malad is drawing foreign patients from East and South Africa, South America, Europe and across the globe.

Bariatrics is here to stay. It is becoming one of the fastest growing surgeries in India. There is a common saying that fat people are the most jovial ones. It may not be a fact. But what is now true is that obese people have truly something to smile about.

Given the diverse spectrum of patients who have come from various countries across the globe and have benefited from bariatric surgery performed at Agrawal Clinic.

The vision of Dr J B Agrawal and Dr Abhay Agrawal a unique father and son team of Bariatric surgeons has helped this centre to become a globally recognized institute for managing obesity in patients and giving them a life full of hope and health.

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