

Risks and Benefits Related to Treatment of Weight Loss Conditions Through Telehealth

Purpose. The purpose of this form is to make sure you are aware of the potential benefits - and risks - of starting a weight loss program.

You will be interacting with the Body Forward network of providers, and it is vitally important for you to advise the provider(s) of ANY concerns, problems, complaints, symptoms, or questions even if you may think it is not terribly important, so the provider team can determine the best course of treatment. Keeping all members of the Body Forward provider network and care team informed of any questions or symptoms you have affords the best chance of providing you with necessary information and developing a path forward.

Potential Benefits of the Treatment Program

Medically significant weight loss (usually about 10 percent of initial weight, or as an example, losing 20 pounds from 200 pounds starting weight) can:

- Lower blood pressure, reducing the risks of hypertension;
- Lower cholesterol, reducing the risks of heart and vascular disease;
- Lower blood sugar, reducing the risks of diabetes

You agree to see your primary care provider, if you are taking medications for one or more of these conditions. Dosages may need to be adjusted as your overall health improves, and it is important to keep your Primary Care and your other healthcare professionals outside of the Body Forward provider network informed.

Other benefits may also be obtained from a weight loss program but cannot be guaranteed. Increasing activity level can favorably affect the above conditions and may have the additional benefit of helping you sustain weight loss. Weight loss and increased activity may provide important psychological and social benefits, as well. As always, you should consult with the medical professionals who have the broadest understanding of your health status before embarking on an exercise regimen.

Possible Side Effects and Risks

The possibility always exists in medicine that the combination of any significant disease with methods employed for its treatment may lead to previously unobserved or unexpected ill effects, including sickness and even death. Should you experience one or more of these ill effects, additional medical or surgical treatment may be necessary, and you must immediately consult with your medical providers, especially your primary care physician. In addition, it is conceivable that other side effects could occur, which are not

addressed below, and if you notice anything unusual following launching into a weight loss program, you should consult a medical professional.

Reduced Weight. When you reduce the number of calories you eat to a level lower than the number of calories your body uses in a day, you lose weight. As a result of this weight loss, your body makes some other adjustments in body processes. Some of these adjustments are responsible, in some participants, for improvements in blood pressure and blood sugar. However, you also may experience other temporary side effects or discomforts, including an initial loss of body fluid through increased urination, momentary dizziness, a reduced metabolic rate or metabolism (the rate at which you convert food to energy), sensitivity to cold, a slower heart rate, dry skin, fatigue, diarrhea or constipation, bad breath, muscle cramps, a change in menstrual pattern, dry and brittle hair or hair loss. Generally, these responses are temporary and resolve when calories are increased after the period of weight loss.

Reduced Potassium Levels. Low potassium levels can cause serious heart irregularities. When someone has been on a reduced calorie diet, a rapid increase in calorie intake, especially overeating or binge-eating, can be associated with bloating, fluid retention, disturbances in salt and mineral balance, or gallbladder attacks and abdominal pain.

Gallstones. Overweight people develop gallstones at a rate higher than normal weight individuals. The occurrence of symptomatic gallstones (pain, diagnosed stones and/or surgery) in individuals 30 percent or more over desirable body weight (50 pounds or more overweight) not undergoing current treatment for obesity is estimated to be 1 in 100 annually, and for individuals who are 20-30 percent overweight, about one-half that rate, or 1 in 200 annually. It is possible to have gallstones and not know it. One study of individuals entering a weight loss program showed that as many as 1 in 10 had "silent" gallstones at the onset. As body weight and age increase, so do the chances of developing gallstones. These chances double for women, women using estrogen, and smokers. Losing weight--especially rapidly--may increase the chances of developing stones or sludge and/or increasing the size of existing stones within the gallbladder. The most common symptoms of gallstones are fever, nausea, and a cramping pain in the right upper abdomen. If you develop any of these symptoms or if you know or suspect that you may already have gallstones, let your provider team and primary care provider know immediately. Gallbladder problems may require medication or surgery to remove the gallbladder, and, less commonly, may be associated with more serious complications of inflammation of the pancreas or even death.

Pancreatitis. Pancreatitis, or an inflammation or infection in the bile ducts, may be associated with the presence of gallstones and the development of sludge or obstruction in the bile ducts. The symptoms of pancreatitis include pain in the left upper abdominal area, nausea, and fever. Pancreatitis may be precipitated by binge-eating or consuming a large meal after a period of dieting. Also associated with pancreatitis is a long-term abuse of alcohol and the use of certain medications and increased age.

Pancreatitis may require surgery and may be associated with more serious complications and death.

Pregnancy. **If you become pregnant, you should immediately stop any and all of your weight loss medications, and report this to your Health care team and primary care provider, immediately.** Your diet will likely need to be changed promptly to avoid further weight loss because a restricted diet could be damaging for a developing fetus. You must take precautions to avoid becoming pregnant during the course of weight loss.

Binge Eating Disorders. Binge eating disorder is defined as the habitual, uncontrolled consumption of a large amount of food in a short period of time. Participation in a calorically restricted diet has been shown in one study to increase binge eating episodes temporarily. Several other studies have demonstrated reduced episodes of binge eating following a calorie deficit and portion-controlled diet. Extended binge eating episodes are associated with weight gain.

The Risk of Weight Regain. Obesity is a chronic condition, and the majority of overweight individuals who lose weight have a tendency to regain all or some of it over time. Factors that help to maintain a reduced body weight include regular physical activity, adherence to a restricted calorie, low fat diet, and planning a strategy for coping with weight regain before it occurs. Successful treatment may take months or even years. Medical studies of calorie deficit/portioned-controlled diets (including modified fasting) have shown varying results for patients who maintain weight loss. Some studies have shown that fewer than 5% of weight loss patients were able to maintain a reduced body weight after five years. Another study showed that after three years, weight loss patients, on average, maintained about one half of their initial weight loss. If you have had fluctuations in your weight in the past, it may be more difficult to maintain the weight you lose during and after this program. A published medical study indicated people whose body weight fluctuates greatly or often have a higher risk of heart disease and death compared with persons of relatively stable body weight, and such weight fluctuations may play a role in the development of other chronic diseases.

Sudden Death. You should be aware that patients with severe and even moderate obesity, particularly those with serious hypertension, coronary artery disease, or diabetes mellitus, have a statistically higher chance of suffering sudden death when compared to normal weight people without such medical problems. This is why it is extremely important for you to embark upon your weight loss program with care, understanding and the active support of those medical professionals who know you best.