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Alberta Health Services, University of Alberta bring new bariatric surgery to Alberta

Laparoscopic Sleeve Gastrectomy boasts faster healing time, less complications

Edmonton, Canada – Alberta Health Services (AHS) is now offering a new kind of bariatric surgery hailed for faster healing times and less complications than other bariatric procedures.

On October 15, Claudia Farner became the first patient in Canada to undergo the Laparoscopic Sleeve Gastrectomy (LSG) procedure, a product of clinical trials jointly offered by AHS's Weight Wise and Centre for the Advancement of Minimally Invasive Surgery (CAMIS) programs, and the University of Alberta Faculty of Medicine & Dentistry.

While it is still too early to see the full results, Farner says her experience was a good one. "I was out of the hospital two days later and working full-time again in seven days," says Farner, who underwent the procedure at the Royal Alexandra Hospital (RAH) in Edmonton.

"LSG is a fascinating new surgical innovation in the battle against the obesity epidemic and we are very excited to begin offering it to our patients in Alberta," says Dr. Arya Sharma, Medical Director of Weight Wise with AHS and Chair of Obesity Research at the University of Alberta.

LSG is technically easier, and a faster procedure than other types of bariatric surgery and can be performed on larger patients who may be considered too high-risk for other types of bariatric surgery. The procedure involves removal of the left side of the stomach, resulting in the formation of a narrower stomach 'tube', about the size of a banana. The procedure does not require re-routing of intestines or implantation of an artificial device in the abdomen.

"My experience demonstrates that LSG is very effective," said Dr. Shazeer Karmali, bariatric surgeon at the RAH, and principal investigator of the study. "Internationally, short term data shows LSG's positive effect on metabolic syndrome, a condition characterized by certain metabolic risk factors such as diabetes, high blood pressure, and excess cholesterol."

All patients being considered for bariatric surgery through Weight Wise's adult clinic will be matched with the surgical procedure that best fits their needs: LSG, Roux-en-Y Gastric Bypass (RYGB) and Laparoscopic Adjustable Gastric Banding (LAGB). RYGB reduces the size of the stomach and bypassing some of the small bowel. With LAGB, an inflatable cuff is placed around the upper part of the stomach so the patient feels full with smaller amounts of food.

"Bariatric procedures like LSG are an important tool in our fight against this epidemic," says Karmali. "But it's important to note that bariatric surgery is a last resort, once other means of weight loss and management have been exhausted."

Alberta Health Services is a provincial-wide organization responsible for planning and delivering accessible and sustainable patient-focused health services to more than 3.5 million Albertans.

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