

Managing Obesity

Obesity is a chronic progressive disease, meaning that someone will have to deal with this condition for the rest of their lives, which of course means that over time a person may suffer a relapse and require further treatment or therapy.

Our Senior Bariatric Medical Practitioner Dr Georgia Rigas has provided us with a very useful analogy for managing obesity following weight loss surgery. Georgia's analogy is that of a "road trip" journey.

People expect that following bariatric surgery the road will be very much like a motorway; flat, straight and easy, you can almost just press cruise control and just keep driving without any incidence.

As we know, this isn't the case. There will be some windy roads and some challenging turns. You will find that you come across obstructions and barriers that you didn't see as you were coming around that last corner. You may even go backwards to try to find your way, and then end up where you started. And let's not forget that change in weather and the blizzard that stops you seeing the light and leaves you feeling hopeless.

As bariatric doctors and surgeons we can't drive the car for you - you're in the driver's seat but what we will do is hold your map, give you directions, providing support and guidance throughout your journey.

Therefore if you feel that your weight loss and health improvement journey has slowed down prematurely, make an appointment to see one of the medical doctors in the team. There are a number of TGA approved medications such as orlistat, phentermine, liraglutide or naltrexone/bupropion which might help. Occasionally we might try off-label medication if need be i.e. for hunger reduction +/- weight loss side effects. Every person's health profile is different and so any medication needs to be tailored to the individual.



Author: Dr Georgia Rigas

Dr Rigas is a vocationally trained General Practitioner and trained surgical assistant, with a primary focus on the multi-generational effects of obesity. Dr Rigas is committed to ongoing education in obesity and bariatrics to both General Practitioners and allied health members. She is on the Medical Advisory Committee of the Australian Diabetes Council, represents the Bariatric Practitioners on the OSSANZ Committee, and is also on the Royal Australian College of General Practitioners NFSI Board, representing the Obesity Network.