

General information about referrals to hospital based services

Appropriate referrals:

The Hospital based Weight Management Service can only see a small fraction of obese patients, even those who might benefit from specialist assessment and treatment. Obesity now affects 18 % of men and 16% of women in Ireland with figures rising all the time

Factors suggesting that a patient is suitable for referral include:

- Need for specialist or multidisciplinary approach
- Presence of co-morbid condition such as Type 2 diabetes, sleep apnoea, cardiovascular disease.
- High level of patient motivation
- Patient understands that the medical goal of weight loss is gradual modest weight loss (initially about 10%).

Patients unsuitable for referral include:

- Bulimia nervosa, active psychiatric disease.
- Patients who do not wish to enter treatment for their obesity
- Those who have not engaged in previous conventional interventions (e.g. commercial slimming groups, healthy eating and increased physical activity).
- Patient has never received even basic healthy eating advice.
- BMI <40 kg/m² with no obesity related co-morbidities.
- Unrealistic weight loss goals (e.g. 10kg in 1 month)
- Short term objectives (e.g. weight loss for a specific event such as a wedding)
- Unable to devote time to attending clinics and working on the problem at home.

Filling in the template below will allow efficient processing of the referral and appropriate prioritising of patients.

As of December 2010 the following two Hospital Weight Management Treatment Services are available:

1. St Columcille's Hospital (SCH) Weight Management Service, Loughlinstown, Co Dublin

Prof Donal O'Shea leads a multidisciplinary team of physicians, nurses, dietitians, physiotherapists, and psychologists, as well as a bariatric surgeon, Mr Justin Geoghegan.

In line with National Obesity Taskforce recommendations, SCH accept referrals for patients with a BMI greater than 40kg/m², or those with a BMI of 35 – 40kg/m² who have obesity related co-morbidities. Referrals are triaged based on a patient's BMI and the presence and number of co-morbidities. Referral letters should always include this information.

Prior to receiving an appointment to the service, all patients are sent an information pack, which includes physical activity and general medical questionnaires, and a food diary. These completed documents must be returned to the clinic before an appointment is sent to the patient. We consider this is an important indication of a

patient's motivation and readiness to make lifestyle changes, factors essential in achieving and sustaining significant weight loss. If patient literacy is anticipated to be a problem, please contact the team directly to discuss the referral.

All patients will undergo a period of conservative management; involving monthly visits for dietetic and exercise advice, as well as psychological assessment and support. Anti-obesity drugs will be prescribed if indicated. This period of lifestyle intervention continues for 6 to 12 months before surgical intervention is considered.

Please send referrals or queries to: Prof Donal O'Shea, Weight Management Service, St Columcille's Hospital, Loughlinstown, Co Dublin. Phone number: 01-2115042, Fax number: 01-2115164.

2. Galway University Hospitals

Dr. Francis Finucane leads the multidisciplinary team at GUH, working closely with Prof. Oliver McAnena, the bariatric surgeon. We accept and assess referrals in a similar way to other centres, as outlined above. Referrals should be sent to Dr. Francis Finucane, Bariatric Medicine, Department of Endocrinology and Diabetes Mellitus, Galway University Hospitals. Our phone number is 091-542108.

Two additional centres are planned in Dublin's Beaumont – Connolly Hospitals and Cork University-Mercy Hospitals. These will complete the full compliment of a Hospital Treatment Service in each of the four HSE areas.

Hospital Weight Management Service Referral Form Template

Phone:

Fax:

XXXXX

Hospital

Email:

Referring GP & GP address	
G.P. Telephone number	
Patient name & address	
Patient phone no.	
Date of birth	
Anthropometric measurements e.g. waist circumference	
Current Weight	
Height	
BMI (kg/m ²)	
Current Medications	
Past medical Hx	
Social Hx of note	
Weight loss meds tried	
Signed	
Today's date	

