

# THE BAY'S Weight Loss Wonder!

*The Bay's beloved Dr. Forrest Ringold of the Surgical Association of Mobile opens up about the latest weight loss treatments and why he loves his job. With new mind blowing technology, the future is bright for those suffering from everything from obesity to a stubborn forty pounds. Here, the skinny on the fight against fat. / By Hayley Hill*

For those of you who don't know Dr. Forrest Ringold, he is that special doctor we all hope for. With a true passion for helping others, his bedside manner is unbeatable, making his calling to help those struggling with weight issues obvious. For so many, especially in Alabama, weight loss is more than a struggle. Many people scoff at weight problems as something an individual should have control over. After all, if you're overweight, isn't the simple solution to just exercise more and eat less? Maybe. But if it were that easy, there wouldn't be such a staggering obesity epidemic in the United States. And while "epidemic" sounds dramatic, consider the fact the United States Department of Health and Human Services estimates that 300,000 deaths a year are associated with obesity and it costs the national economy approximately \$117 million each year. Closely related to almost 30 medical conditions, some life-threatening, a person severely overweight is at an increased risk for heart attack, hypertension, glaucoma, cancer of the colon, uterus, breast, and esophagus, sleep apnea, depression, Type 2 diabetes, stroke, and much more. Ugh! When it comes to Alabama, Dr. Ringold, a native, shares, "We have the second highest adult obesity rate in the nation, which is currently 35.6 percent, up from 22.6 percent in 2000. With so many treatment options, I want people to know there is help and a solution for everyone, many are covered by insurance and there are plenty of non-surgical options as well." With alarming statistics out of the way, it was such a pleasure to sit down with Dr. Ringold to discuss the latest options in tackling what for many feels like a hopeless situation. A board certified general surgeon, Dr. Ringold received his education at the University of South Alabama Medical School and completed his Residency in General Surgery at the University of South Alabama Medical Center where he served as Chief Resident from 2001 to 2002. With his experience, it is the transformation of his patients' lives that drives him. "There is simply nothing more rewarding than helping someone who has struggled, sometimes most of their lives, with weight issues. The experience for them is

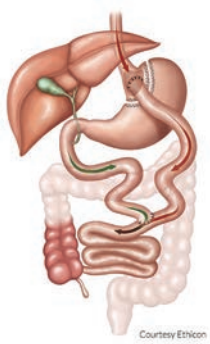


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life changing and their gratitude is truly moving. Often having been bullied or treated less than, being a part of a patient's journey is very emotional for all of those involved. My staff and I are very aware of this and are honored to work diligently to support and make real changes in our patients' lives. Education plays a big part as well since so many treatments continuously modernize. For example, a gastric bypass has changed drastically since it's conception and is much less invasive," shares Dr. Ringold. What was most interesting about our chat, Dr. Ringold, who is also a Fellow of the American College of Surgeons and the American Society of Bariatric Surgeons, and is a clinical instructor for the Department of Surgery at the University of South Alabama, was his dedication to keeping up with most advanced treatments, specifically the Orbera IntraGastric Balloon. "While only recently approved in the United States, this treatment, which has long been practiced all over the world, is just the beginning of what is sure to be the future of weight loss. Quite simply, a balloon is inserted through the patient's throat and inflated once in the stomach to create a sense of fullness. This is perfect for someone who would prefer to avoid surgery and looking to lose approximately forty pounds. In addition to a gym membership, a licensed dietitian works with our patients to manage food choices and maximize results. While the balloon is removed in six months time, we see our clients for an entire year to manage their nutrition and fitness," shares Dr. Ringold. As a doting dad of three children, many are familiar with Dr. Ringold's wife, another doctor, the in-demand Dr. Jill Ringold of the Greater Mobile Laser & Aesthetic Center, known for their advanced laser and skin care solutions. Both helping others be their best selves and proving to be a match made in heaven, they are also members of Ashland Place United Methodist Church. Having previously served on the board of the Medical Society of Mobile County, Dr. Ringold also enjoys an old fashioned day of fishing! It seems half the battle of true weight loss success is finding a compassionate expert to share the journey with—Dr. Ringold gets our vote hands down. Here, an outline of his services from the simple to the more invasive. Whatever your journey involves, today is a new day and with modern medicine and the right team, anything is possible.

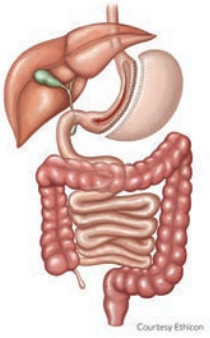
## GASTRIC BYPASS

The most popular weight loss surgical procedure in the United States until recently, the results of this procedure include exceptional weight loss and disease resolution potential. Sometimes referred to as the Roux-en-Y, or RNY, simply because of how it's performed, a gastric bypass is minimally invasive. This means staying a short time in hospital, suffering less pain, losing less blood and generally fewer complications compared with other procedures. During surgery, 80 percent of the patient's stomach is removed. The remaining 20 percent is about the size of a golf ball and will only hold small amounts of food, thus restricting the patient's food intake. The second phase sees a bypass of the small intestine, decreasing the number of calories that can be absorbed.



## GASTRIC SLEEVE

Also known as the sleeve gastrectomy, the gastric sleeve procedure has overtaken the gastric bypass to become the most popular of these procedures in the country, largely due to its simplicity and effectiveness. This major bariatric procedure is covered by most insurance companies as well as Medicare and is minimally invasive with five small incisions rather than open surgery. During the procedure, some of the stomach is removed with just 20 to 30 percent remaining in the shape of a banana and a patient can expect their digestive system to function as normal afterwards – the only difference being a smaller stomach. Compared to a gastric bypass, patients with a gastric sleeve have fewer food restrictions after their operation.



## GASTRIC BANDING

Also known as the Lap-Band, this implant-based procedure can be a solution for morbidly obese patients. This minimally invasive option is unique as it is the only surgical procedure approved for those with a BMI of 30 to 34.9, who may suffer from one or several obesity-related diseases. A small, silicon band is placed around the top of the stomach. Once the surgeon tightens the band, two chambers are created in the stomach. A passageway into the chambers allows food to pass slowly and restricts the amount of food the patient can comfortably eat in one sitting. It's worth noting that the results of this procedure are not as effective as the sleeve or bypass. But, patients can still expect to lose a considerable amount of weight and the procedure is reversible and adjustable.



## INTRAGASTRIC BALLOON

The Orbera IntraGastric Balloon is the latest weight loss-related medical device to be approved by the FDA. With two phases, it entails the insertion of a balloon-like implant in the stomach and a yearlong medical weight loss program. The balloon is placed endoscopically with mild sedation and the procedure takes roughly 30 minutes. In contrast to the other three options

offered by the Surgical Association of Mobile, patients can expect to be allowed to go home on the day of this less invasive procedure. Backed by 20 years of clinical research, it's estimated that over 200,000 balloons have been inserted worldwide to date. Doctors believe this system could be ideal for patients who don't qualify for bariatric surgery or who would prefer a non-surgical route to weight loss.



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