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Area doctor working to improve availability of laparoscopic surgery

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A local doctor has partnered with the health care company Allergan to bring a state-of-the-art lap-band procedure to Delray Medical Center.

Dr. Karin Blumofe of Minimally Invasive Surgical Associates of South Florida, a practice specializing in laparoscopic and general surgery, said that lap-band surgery is now available at Delray Medical Center, 5352 Linton Blvd. Blumofe, who is a member of the center's staff, started a lap-band surgery program in 2008 at a hospital in Beloit, Wis.

"I started and put together a new program there. When I took this job, I immediately became interested in bringing a lap-band program to Delray Medical Center," she said.

Blumofe is working closely with Allergan representative Peter Kafka. Based in Irvine, Calif., Allergan produces lap-bands, as well as Botox and a line of breast implants.

"We concentrate on surgical weight loss," Kafka said. "We're the worldwide leader in lap-bands, with a 90 percent market share.

"One in five Americans are candidates for the lap-band surgery. That's 60 million Americans. Candidates with a body mass index (BMI) of over 30 are candidates. Anyone who's morbidly overweight or is overweight with diabetes could be possible candidates."

Blumofe said lap-band surgeries typically take just over an hour. Patients go home the same day and are back to work the next week.

"I think that with each new day, the recovery with lap-band surgery becomes easier," Blumofe said. "It's less invasive. The stomach is a big muscle that stretches and stretches. Think of a balloon being blown up as we overeat. With Lap-Band surgery, we reduce the stomach to the size of about two chicken nuggets."

In order to qualify for the surgery, patients must go through a pre-operative evaluation and adhere to a medically supervised diet for two weeks.

"If they can get through, then they're a great candidate for surgery," Blumofe said. "It's thorough. ... Patients even go through a psychiatric evaluation and are educated about eating habits, behavior, emotional stress."

For more information, visit <http://www.lapband.com>, <http://www.delraymedicalctr.com> or call Dr. Blumofe at 561-495-0660.

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