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Fracture Risk Doubled After Bariatric Surgery

The dramatic and sustained increase in bone turnover that occurs following surgery for obesity, or “bariatric surgery,” trans-



lates into a significantly increased risk of fractures, especially in the hands and feet, according to a study presented today at The Endocrine Society’s annual meeting in Washington, DC.

The study team, from the Mayo Clinic, Rochester, Minnesota, compared the fracture rate in 97 patients (average age of 44 years) who underwent bariatric surgery to the rate expected in individuals of the same age and sex in the general population.

Gastric bypass was performed in 90 percent of the subjects while 10 percent had either vertical banded gastroplasty or bilio-

pancreatic diversion. Eighty-six of the subjects were women.

Within an average of 7 years after surgery, 21 bariatric surgery patients experienced a total of 31 fractures, the investigators report.

“We showed that patients who have had bariatric surgery have about a two-fold increased risk in developing a fracture or sustaining a fracture as compared to the normal population,” said study presenter Dr. Elizabeth Chittilapilly Haglind.

The surgical patients’ risk of a first fracture at any site was increased by 80 percent. The increased risk was 40 percent for a first fracture at the hip, wrist, spine or arm; the risk of fracture at all other sites was doubled. The risk of hand or foot fracture was the most elevated, with an increase of more than threefold and almost fourfold, respectively.

In a statement from the meeting, study co-investigator Dr. Jackie Clowes said: “It is currently unclear why fractures are more common after bariatric surgery, especially at the hand and foot. Although aggressive calcium and vitamin D supplementation after (bariatric) surgery may well help, it may still be insufficient to prevent the increased risk of fracture.”

Haglind added, “More research is needed to confirm our findings and understand the specific risk factors and mechanisms involved.”

continued from page 60



The following morning, after Shacharis, we head toward the bais olam thus fulfilling our promise to the Gaon that we will visit once a year.

As we approach the ohel, we hear the sounds of crying and weeping... The ohel is packed from one end to the other with visitors, the atmosphere filled with their sighs, sobs and requests... Most of those present are students of the Gaon that came great distances to pour their hearts out at his gravesite and to beg for Hashem’s mercy.

With the conclusion of the supplications, a minyan is organized for reciting chapters of Tehillim *l’iluy nishmas* the niftar.

Along the entire way back to the settlement of the village, we wonder how so many vehicles keep arriving at the site, creating heavy traffic, yet with all of the recent developments of the yeshiva including the construction of a proper dormitory and offices on par with modern standards... a system to supervise traffic, for all of the foreigners that come annually for the *yahrzeit*, has not yet been instituted!

At midday we depart from the village of Unsdorf and the Rav and from the great holiness in which we were engulfed for the past 24 hours, and the wondrous memories...

Suddenly, we return again to our regular schedules, the “gray” routine of daily living... Only the knowledge that in one year we will return here – unless we meet, before then, face to face by “tchias hameisim” – is what consoles us and gives us the strength to continue.

R’Yosef Gutman, the writer of these columns, became orphaned from his father at the tender age of 17, so when he dubbed his Rebbe, Rav Shmuel, a true *avi yesomim*, he was speaking from his personal experience and his deep recognition of Rav Shmuel’s loving care and guidance through the difficult years of his youth. He wrote how Rav Shmuel was actually like a father to *all* of his talmidim but especially to those of his students that were orphaned.

And R’Yosef, in turn, like a son, retained vivid remembrances of Rav Shmuel, which he later penned, time and again, with his natural flair for writing...

The memoirs have remained alive and meaningful, like the day they were written, even long after R’Yosef gave his life *al kiddush Hashem* at the hands of the Nazis *ym”s*, Hy”d.

Yehei zichro baruch.

Mayor of Bnei Brak, Yaakov Asher Visits NY

Yaakov Asher, the newly elected Mayor of Bnei Brak, home to one the largest concentration of Charedi Jews in the world with a population of over 160,000 is visiting the United States for the first time since assuming the office of Mayor. The purpose of the visit is to introduce to the US public the establishment of the Development Fund for Bnei Brak, whose mission will be to attract foreign investment to Bnei Brak and be responsible for projects to enhance the quality of life for its residents both current and future.

According to Ezra Friedlander, CEO of the Friedlander Group, representative of the Bnei Brak Fund, the visit of Mayor Asher will allow him to meet with important communal and business leaders from across the broad spectrum of the Jewish community in an effort to create interest in this new entity that will focus on initiating and partnering projects with potential investors that will focus in the realm of recreation and special education.

Bnei Brak is synonymous with the timeless values of Jewish tradition boasting a myriad of Chasidic centers, Shuls, famous Yeshivas and can be described as the capital of chesed in Eretz Yisreol. Additionally, the vast majority of the NY Jewish community shares a close kinship with

Bnei Brak both familial and communal. It is with these statistics that great anticipation is being generated towards the maiden trip of Mayor Asher to the United States.

After twenty years of an exemplary public service, with no problem ever too big or too small for his attention, and unparalleled devotion to each and every person, the esteemed Yaakov Asher, with



wall-to-wall support of leaders and the public, and without an election process, was elected mayor of Bnei-Brak.

His first two goals, immediately after assuming office are: to lead the city into economical independence by promoting the building of high-risers in its north part, as well as commerce and occupation centers, etc.; and the creation of a development fund, much like the one founded by the past mayor of Jerusalem, through which

donors from around the world who understand the importance of preserving this precious Torah city, will support various welfare, education and over-all quality of life enterprises.

On Monday May 15, the US offices of Merkaz Mosdos Belz in Eretz Yisroel hosted a gala *Kabalas Panim* at Yeled V’Yalda ECC, in honor of Mayor Asher which was attended by supporters and friends of Bnei Brak.

“PRIORITY 7” VOUCHER FUNDING RESTORED TO NYC BUDGET

NEW YORK – New York City’s budget for the coming fiscal year, agreed to on Monday, includes the restoration of full funding, to the tune of \$8 million, for “Priority 7” after-school vouchers for the next six months. Over past weeks, after the initial version of the city budget was proposed and eliminated funding for the vouchers, a move that would have hit the Orthodox Jewish community disproportionately hard, Agudath Israel of America spearheaded a campaign on behalf of having the funding reinstated.

The child care voucher program provides vouchers to parents of school-age children if certain criteria are met. Under “Priority 7” of the program, vouchers are provided to families where one parent is working full time and the other faces a substantial degree of social difficulty without child care assistance.

With its often large families and particular financial challenges, the city’s Orthodox Jewish community has been the main beneficiary of the Priority 7 category. Some 2000 child care vouchers, worth approximately \$15 million dollars to their recipients, have been distributed yearly to parents in heavily Orthodox parts of New York.

On June 2, Agudath Israel brought together city government officials and administrators of yeshivos throughout New York City to discuss the proposed elimination of Priority 7.

At the meeting, Agudath Israel distributed to the yeshiva administrators copies of letters, respectfully but strongly objecting to the planned

elimination of Priority 7, with the intent that they be shared with parents of their students and, signed by parents, delivered to City Hall. Joining the Agudath Israel leaders on the steps of City Hall mere days later, when 30,000 of the letters were in fact delivered, were community activists Yoel Braver, Shiya Ostericher prominent Belz askan and Shloma Twersky; and City Councilmembers Bill de Blasio, Simcha Felder, Lewis A. Fidler, Melinda R. Katz, Michael C. Nelson, David I. Weprin and David Yassky.

Agudath Israel’s executive vice president, Rabbi Chaim Dovid Zwiebel expressed deep gratitude to the yeshiva principals who encouraged parents to consider the letters; and particularly to Mr. Ostericher and to Agudath Israel’s vice president for community affairs, Rabbi Shmuel Lefkowitz for their work on behalf of the campaign.

“Now,” said Rabbi Zwiebel, “all the effort has borne fruit. The community spoke, and our elected officials listened.”

“This is heartening news for the approximately two thousand parents who, thanks to Mayor Bloomberg’s leadership, will now be able to continue to benefit from these vouchers, at least for the next half year. But it is also a lesson to us all that, when we identify a community need and work together, our voices count.”

At the end of six months, sources in the Mayor’s office say, the issue will be revisited and a decision made about further extending funding for the vouchers.