

[Surgery not an easy fix for diabetes](#)

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Over the past few years, weight loss surgery has become an increasingly popular option to treat Type 2 diabetes, but Dr. Vivian Fonseca, professor of medicine at the Tulane University School of Medicine, says it is not a cure-all.



“There is no quick fix but we have much better ways to manage diabetes today than we did in the past, and these have contributed to lower complication rates,” says Dr. Vivian Fonseca. (Photo by Paula Burch-Celentano)

A recent [study](#) in the journal *Obesity Surgery* found that many obese Type 2 diabetics who undergo gastric bypass surgery do not experience a remission of their disease. And of those who do, about a third redevelop diabetes within five years of their operation. This is a contrast to previous studies that reported surgery worked better than drugs, diet and exercise in causing a remission of Type 2 diabetes.

“People had the impression that bariatric surgery was a fantastic cure for diabetes. This latest study enrolled a population that allowed researchers to monitor people following surgery for an extended period of time,” says [Fonseca](#), who holds the Tullis-Tulane Alumni Chair in Diabetes and is section chief of endocrinology.

Although some patients involved in the study had a relapse of diabetes because

they regained weight, others redeveloped the disease but maintained their weight loss. The study has created additional questions regarding bariatric surgery but more importantly has given patients and physicians a dose of reality.

Although there is still no cure-all for diabetes, Fonseca and his team are working on several studies of diabetes treatment including an alternative to gastric bypass surgery.

“In the new year, we will begin working on an EndoBarrier technique that is a less invasive and totally reversible way of achieving some of the benefits of bariatric surgery,” says Fonseca.

Fonseca's team is working on a program to communicate with diabetes patients through [text messaging](#). In the spring, Tulane researchers also will begin to study a large variety of current diabetes treatments to compare them.