PHILADELPHIA (CBS 3) — A potential new cure for diabetes is being tested here in Philadelphia. More than 20 million Americans who are undiagnosed. Medication and insulin help treat the condition, but now doctors are looking for a way to cure it, and it's being tested locally.

65-year-old Jim Edelstein spent most of his life struggling with weight.

"All I did was eat. And I knew what I was doing was terrible, and I had no control over it," said Jim. Like many overweight people, Jim suffered from chronic medical conditions, including diabetes.

"I was injecting 300 units of three different types of insulin a day. And now I don't," said Jim. His diabetes is gone now. His solution was gastric bypass surgery.

"It's not being coupled with just weight loss surgery. It's also being touted as a treatment for diabetes going forward," said Dr. Noel Williams, Chief of Bariatric Surgery at the Hospital of the University of Pennsylvania. He says gastric bypass surgery involves reducing the size of the stomach, and reconnecting the small intestine. For his patients, like Jim, their diabetes goes away within six weeks of surgery.

"I think one of the reasons this is happening is that there's a change in the hormones on the inside because of the flow of the food," said Dr. Williams.

HUP is researching three different weight loss therapies to see which works best to cure diabetes. One is gastric bypass surgery, second a lap band which is less invasive. It's a band around the stomach that controls food intake. And third an intense diet, that includes exercise and behavior therapy.

Researchers are accepting diabetics with a body mass index between 30 and 39, who aren't typically candidates for surgery because they aren't heavy enough.

"It would be very, very significant," said Dr. Williams.

Jim is thrilled that he's lost 94 pounds since his surgery a year ago, and remains diabetes free.

"It's a no brainer. Ya know it's great," said Jim.

Patients in the study must have type 2 diabetes, be over 18 years old, and have insurance to participate.

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