

Light for Life

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ONE YEAR LATER

We are fast approaching our 1 year anniversary of our first Lap-band surgery. During this first year we did about 75 surgeries. Both Drs. Quaid and Roller are now performing the Lap-band in addition to the Gastric Bypass. Drs. Dickinson and Pettine also perform the Gastric Bypass.

Nutrition Tip

If preparation time is a stumbling block, buy pre-cut, pre-washed vegetables such as baby carrots, sliced mushrooms, melon bowls or salads in bags. Go to the deli dept. of your supermarket and buy cut-up fruits and vegetables in small quantities by the pound. Treat yourself to your favorite fruit for dessert, even if it's expensive. You wouldn't have thought twice about spending the same amount for ice cream so why hesitate to spend it on melon or berries even when not in season?

TRANSFER OF ADDICTION

There has been a lot written lately about the transfer of addiction following weight loss surgery. No one really knows how many people who seek bariatric surgery may transfer addiction to something else equally devastating after obtaining surgery. What we do know is the addiction factor is by no means limited to excessive food or alcohol consumption; it can show up as uncontrolled spending, drug-related difficulties, smoking, sexual promiscuity, or compulsive gambling. In fact, virtually any behavior exhibited in excess can interfere with the goals of a comprehensive bariatric surgery program. People suffering with other addictive issues also tend to display similar characteristics such as regressive stress coping behavior, and turn to the drug of their choice for comfort or escape from difficult feelings.

What can be done to help prevent transfer of addiction? Education is the most important aspect of preparation for the bariatric patient. Armed with the knowledge of possible postoperative addictions, the educated patient may notice early warning signs and seek the appropriate assistance. Without education, the patient may not initially see the connection between bariatric surgery and the other addictive changes. In addition to educating new patients, it may be equally important to educate millions of postoperative patients. They may be years out of surgery, yet they may be a higher risk for transfer of addiction. If this has been an issue please contact your therapist or call Dr. Betty Vanek at 396-9729 or Dr. Pat DeMarco at 226-6968 for further help. You may also call our office and talk with Becki Mudgett.

ON LINE NEWSLETTER

Thanks to all of you for being patient as we worked our way through the ins and outs of getting our newsletter on line. I hope that this will be an easy way for most of our patients to access the newsletter. Along with this process, we have updated our website. I hope you will find it easy to navigate and access whatever information you are looking for. As you can see, we now have links to Pivotal Wellness and Health Esteem (Dr. Betty Vanek) as well as the PVH website and Obesityhelp.com. You will be able to obtain information regarding our support groups as well as upcoming symposiums. I hope you will find this a useful tool.

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REMEMBER WHY *by Donna Kelley*

Remember why you chose to have WLS? Go back to when you made the decision to turn your life in another (better, healthier) direction. This choice was a **commitment!** A life changing, life long commitment. Remember what led you to that decision? Remember how bad you felt, how hard it was to do the simplest of things like tie your shoes, walk across a room, walk up a flight of stairs, find clothes that fit, meet new people (they might judge you) or fit comfortably in a chair. Remember how the side effects of medications made you feel? Remember how you longed to not be stared at as you made your way through life....how you longed to be desired by your person again....how you longed to have energy, to breathe easier, to not be tired all the time, to not hurt in your joints? Remember how you just wanted to feel normal? Remember....remember....remember.

These are some of the reasons why we chose to have surgery. We knew there were risks involved. We knew our lives would be forever changed. We knew we might get sick if we ate too much, too fast or didn't chew well enough. We knew that we would forever need to change our way of thinking, eating and living. How could we not know? The doctors told us, the psychologists told us, the nurses told us, the dietitians told us, the literature told us and we told each other in support group. We knew it was major surgery with risks, and yet, we chose it anyway. We

were told that this surgery is a tool. A tool that is not easy at times, but worth every step. A step toward feeling better, breathing easier, having more energy and living healthier. A step toward living a normal life.

Steps become a *journey*. A journey that is different for each of us. A wonderful thing starts to happen a few weeks into our journey. Our clothes start fitting better, we can breathe easier, and our health starts to improve. And while it's hard at first, we do it because we chose to do this and we are worth it. I, for one, did not put my body through the trauma of surgery to **NOT** have the best possible outcome. We chose this because nothing else worked.

So, remember where you came from. Remember why you had the surgery. Remember that our surgery is a tool and not magic. Our choices are what make us successful. Let's not go back to the way we were. Embrace the new us, knowing that not every day is a good day, but that we still have tomorrow and our future is limited only by what we hold ourselves back from. So enjoy your new life, celebrate being normal and thrive. (*Donna is 1 year out of surgery*).