



Weight?

DECEMBER, 2008

A BARIATRIC SUPPORT SERVICE PROVIDED BY ST. JOSEPH'S

CATHOLIC HEALTH
INITIATIVES

St. Joseph's Area Health Services
THE CENTER FOR WEIGHT MANAGEMENT

Retreat wrap-up

Support, discovery,
questions... See 4-5

On the fast track to running

Weight loss fuels
active lifestyle... See 3

Erin loses 100 lbs. with Lap-Band

Different challenges face
those opting for adjustable
band surgery... See 2



Pros outweighed cons for Erin who chooses adjustable band procedure over bypass surgery



Erin Hensel hopes to lose another 20 pounds to reach her goal weight.



Erin Hensel carried more than 300 pounds on her 5-foot, 10 1/2-inch frame.

Editor's Note: The adjustable band or Lap-Band System procedure is one of several options available to patients at the Center for Weight Management. Dr. Daniel Smith and Dr. Robert Wroblewski also specialize in the Roux en-Y procedure or gastric bypass surgery which is considered a gold standard in the bariatric field. Non-surgical solutions are an option as well.)

Erin Hensel of Osage was one of Dr. Daniel Smith's first adjustable band surgery patients at the Center for Weight Management in Park Rapids on Nov. 2, 2007.

In less than a year she's taken 100 pounds off of her 5-foot, 10 1/2-inch frame and decreased her clothing size by 10 dress sizes.

What is especially endearing about Hensel is her candor when sharing her story and "joy" with the world. She is open about the process that led her to surgery in the first place as well as the rewards experienced to date.

Her story also highlights the different struggles she faces as compared to someone who opts for bypass surgery. It isn't always easier, and Hensel knows full well she has work ahead.

"The real challenge will be

keeping the weight off and maintaining it," she says.

Age on her side

Hensel carefully weighed her options throughout the evaluation process and spoke with Dr. Smith about her choice to go ahead with the Lap-Band. She was a lot more comfortable in choosing an adjustable band procedure versus the "body altering" and "permanent" re-routing of her digestive tract.

At her highest weight of 330 pounds, Dr. Smith concurred that she would be a good adjustable band candidate since she was relatively young at age 33 in combination with the fact that she was in no hurry to take the weight off as urgently as someone with pressing co-morbidities might. (Hensel had minor health conditions as a result of the excess weight.)

Hensel wanted the silicone band and faster recovery time. She had her surgery on a Friday and was released from the hospital the following morning. She wanted to look healthy for her children's sake and still look like mom during the process so the longer time it took to lose the weight wasn't an issue for her.

Her trade-off was that she knew she would have more follow-up appointments at the clin-

ic, Innovis Health Park Rapids, and she would still be tempted with sweet treats since adjustable band patients don't experience the dumping syndrome associated with gastric bypass.

"It is easier for me to cheat," she admits. "And, if I'm not careful, I can still overeat. I can still eat something until it's gone, and that's a challenge for me."

She has to be more diligent, and it's teaching her to be self-disciplined in her choices.

"It's like any diet, you still have to follow the rules to be successful," Hensel says.

Soul searching

The process took a measure of self evaluation, and Hensel took an honest look at herself.

"I was great at joking about my size," she says, "and could hide behind my weight as an excuse. "Oh, I can't do that because..."

Hensel turned to the Center for Weight Management in the end for medical and emotional reasons: to be healthy for her family and set an example of how to eat; heart disease runs in the family and her blood pressure was slightly elevated; back problems and skin breakdowns

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We want to hear from you...

Y Weight invites you to submit articles, questions, stories, your personal profile or any information you feel would benefit other gastric patients, to Arlys Hess, social worker, at 218-237-5588. Address correspondence to her at St. Joseph's Area Health Services, 600 Pleasant Ave., Park Rapids, MN 56470 or e-mail: arlyshess@catholichealth.net

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“ I decided to have surgery so I could be more physically active.”

-- Jeanne Kritzberger



(Above center) Jeanne overlooking lake one week prior to surgery. (At left) Running the YMCA Chase Race on June 12. (Right) Most recent photo taken with 5th place trophy in August at the State Softball Rec. III tournament.

Step by step Kritzberger adds running 5Ks to her new sporting 'to do' list

Jeanne Kritzberger, 26, of West Fargo ran a personal best during a 5K footrace in Hillsboro, ND, in September. She marked a 29:21 finish one year to the month after her gastric bypass surgery with Dr. Dan Smith at St. Joseph's Center for Weight Management in Park Rapids.

She spent a year building up to that point by gaining strength and stamina while at the same time losing weight.

Kritzberger is a self-proclaimed physically active person who takes up basketball, volleyball, softball, and now running.

She wanted to lose the weight so she could continue to move.

“I decided to have surgery so I could be more physically active,” she says.

Kritzberger has already lost 80 pounds and continues to work off the final 20 in order to reach her goal weight.

“My reason for running was so I would feel better and get into shape for the Fargo Marathon 5K Fun Run on May 17,”

Kritzberger explains. She signed up for the race shortly after surgery from a motivational standpoint; it was a goal of hers to compete.

Kritzberger started out slow. Initially, she would run a couple of minutes, walk, then run some more. Eventually she was able to run for a 15-minute stretch. Admittedly she

didn't train a whole lot prior to the Fargo race due to the weather, but in the final week before the big day she made it out every day.

The race day high was exhilarating.

“Oh, my goodness, it felt awesome. I started the race way in front of the pack with all of the fast runners. Bad mistake on my part.”

Kritzberger sprinted the first half mile of her run, and it wasn't long before her muscles retaliated and started to cramp. “I didn't eat or drink all that much before the race, either,” she admitted. “I nearly passed out after crossing the finish line (at 30:15).”

Still, she was hooked and learned from her errors. Since the Fargo 5K (one of her favorites because it was her first) she has competed in five different races including those in Fargo, Park Rapids, and Detroit Lakes over the course of the summer and into fall.

If anyone is thinking about possibly starting to run, Kritzberger suggests they start slow and don't push too hard in the beginning. Drinking plenty of water is also always good advice.

Believing in yourself is a must, she insists. “Always think to yourself: Yes! you can do it!”

Spotlight on the New You!

At the Dec. 11 Y Weight Support Group meeting, we will once again be having a “Spotlight on the New You!” program with a “before and after” slide show.

This will be a time to acknowledge and celebrate the weight loss successes of participants.

If you would like to participate in this fun, meaningful event, send a “before surgery” picture to Arlys Hess as close to Dec. 1 as possible. E-mail her at:

arlyshess@catholicealth.net.

You may also send your photos to St. Joseph's Area Health Services, Attn: Arlys Hess, 600 Pleasant Ave., Park Rapids, MN 56470.

The group will be held in the new meeting space in the lower level of the new medical offices building attached to St. Joseph's. Ask for directions upon entering.

Y Weight? Support group schedule

► Jan. 8: “New Year, New Goals!”/ “How'd the Holidays Go?”

► Jan. 22: “What's Good, or Bad, About Sugar Substitutes?”, Jessica Weickert, Dietary Intern.

► Feb. 12: “Developing Good Eating Habits.”

► Feb. 26: “Sabotaging Weight Loss Success,” Joel Kirchner, PhD.

► March 12: Open Discussion / Clothing Exchange.

► March 26: “Body Composition Using the Tanita Scale, Part I,” Amy Erickson, Exercise Physiologist.



*(Above) Karen Mayer Cunningham
(At left) Small groups gather around the night fires to discuss concerns.*



Weekend retreat a great chance to learn, regroup, share, support

Event brings patients, professionals together for casual exchange

As though the natural, zen-like wooded environment weren't enough, weight-loss surgery patients found themselves in a serene setting to share successes, offer support to one another, and discover some interpersonal insight to their ongoing journey with weight loss.

St. Joseph's Center for Weight Management's Weekend in the Pines retreat was a chance for quiet breakthroughs, reflection, and a chance to ask questions.

Here's to you!

During the opening success walk, complete with personal stories and "before and after" photos, all were applauded for their achievements.

Being able to zip a jacket, the crossing of legs while sitting, or riding comfortably in an airplane seat without fear of being called out by the flight crew, were stories shared (some with tears). Many in the room nodded their heads as they related to the transformation they made because of their choice to seek help at The Center for Weight Management.

As they lost the weight, patients said they learned a thing or two about self-love and inner strength.

"I wouldn't be alive today if I hadn't talked to Leah (Walters)," one confessed. (Walters is the center's bariatric coordinator.)

It ain't easy

When sitting with a group of surgical weight-loss patients it isn't long before the inevitable topic of protein surfaces. Even when groups broke out into fire-light sessions it was clearly on the priority of things to talk about.

Interestingly, this is the first Weekend in the Pines in which people with adjustable bands met to share notes.

They talked about physical struggles and about what they can and can't eat. They know that their choice to go with the silicone banding means they will need greater discipline since they can still eat sweets and don't "get" to experience the dumping syndrome associated with gastric bypass surgery.

"It's not an easy thing; it's tougher, it's harder," one confessed. Still, her resolve was firm. "I don't want to go back and be that person anymore."

The understanding remains clear. The adjustable band is merely a tool to get to the goal of maintained weight loss.



A fashion review for the "new you" featured clothing from Park Rapids' Merry Bees.



Experts share insight on questions from retreat goers.



The Smoky Hills Retreat and Conference Center near Osage made the perfect setting for a morning walk in the woods.

Realistic self-appraisal of your new body helps when you are stuck in your old, former ways of thinking

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Your body changes, your brain may not

So you're in your new body. You're at the shopping mall, and anxiety takes over. You're afraid you're not going to be able to walk back to the car.

At one time that may have been true (at least in your memory's eye when you were morbidly obese), but now that you've reached goal weight, why is your brain still wired to that old way of thinking? Many say they lost the weight but still "feel fat."

The Center for Weight Management's "dream team" consisting of a pharmacist, registered dietitian, assistant, physician assistant, and psychologist addresses this repeated question.

Joel Kirchner, PhD, suggests to stop and address any anxiety or fear-driven emotion by challenging the issue rather than avoiding it. Changing your thoughts or feelings can take time and is an ongoing process. "You have to change the behavior," he

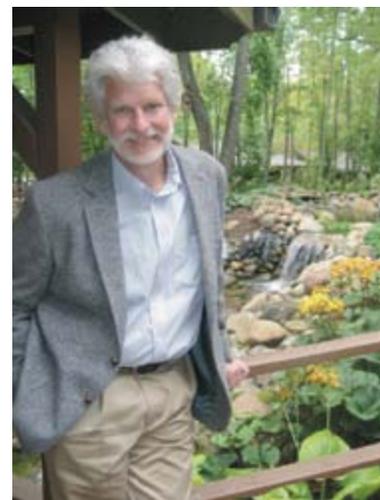
points out. It can take work, but eventually it's possible to "see" the person you know is there.

Support groups can also help. In fact, the more support you get, the more likely one is to sustain those changes.

The Center for Weight Management has resources available through programs, personnel, and recommended online sites to help with these and other issues.

"There is no Lap-Band for the brain," says Karen Mayer Cunningham, guest speaker and humorist. "There is no bypass for the brain. You have to like you."

The topic of divorce rates also came up and it was noted that the divorce rate for weight-loss surgery patients is at about 80 percent compared to 50 percent for the general population. Dynamics that can occur during a person's transformation can be significant. Pre-counseling and education can prepare couples for the changes and possible stresses that may happen throughout the weight-loss process.



Joel Kirchner, PhD, held small-group discussions for retreat participants dealing with depression. While the issue is very complex, he says it's important to "elicit support" and work to manage the condition. Avoiding isolation is also key.

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Weight?⁶

Take Note

▶ There is now a support group meeting in Mahnomon, MN, at the Star Fitness Center, 5:30 p.m. the last Tuesday of every month. This group is open to people who have had weight loss surgery or are interested in obtaining more information about it. Family and friends are welcome to attend as well. Please contact Kim Turner (218-983-3286) or Karen Coleman (218-983-4300) for further information.

▶ Look for a support group in your community. Research shows that individuals who experience the greatest long-term success following

weight loss surgery are those involved in a support group.

▶ Meetings will be held in the new conference room once the new medical office building attached to St. Joseph's opens Dec. 8. Staff will be available to give directions upon entering. Please call St. Joseph's Center for Weight Management (218-237-5757) if you have any questions.

▶ The next "POWER Up Your Pouch" session will be held from March 26 - April 30. To register contact Arlys Hess at arlyshess@catholicealth.net or call 218-237-5588.

Hensel lauds family support

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continued to be a concern; to improve her self-worth and be "taken seriously"; to no longer be perceived as "invisible" and be more accepted socially.

She still searches out her reasons for overeating and tries to find new ways to replace food.

A little trick she learned is to dish up her food and then put some back right away. She notes it's tough for her to change habits and re-compute what is an appropriate portion size.

"I do miss being able to overindulge," she says, which is why she looks to find ways to replace the relationship she once had with food. "I ate waaaay too much before."

Hensel considers herself fortunate to have a good friend with whom she can venture out

on walks. Now she can walk for an hour and still have energy to spare. "I'm getting stuff done I've been meaning to do for years."

Her family and husband have turned out to be her main support system.

She knows her husband is on board with what she's doing and loves her no matter what the scale says. Her kids are there to remind her to stay away from the pop.

"I've really enjoyed it actually," she says. Gone are the days of cycles in which she would lose weight only to gain it back again and again.

Hensel would like to lose another 20 pounds at which time her focus will be on maintaining the weight she has worked so hard to lose.