



# Y B a r i a t r i c s Weight?

June, 2005

A support group newsletter for gastric bypass patients

† Catholic Health Initiatives

## St. Joseph's Area Health Services

The mission of the Y Weight gastric bypass support group is to provide a supportive learning environment for pre- and post-surgical patients and their families and friends. We exist to help, with kindness and compassion, those who have completed or are contemplating gastric bypass surgery (GBPS).

Knowing that GBPS is a life-changing operation, Y Weight promotes lifestyle changes which enhance the holistic health of its members. Through meetings where education, affirmation, inspiration and socialization occur, the following personal growth tools are provided:

- ▶ Open forum discussion
- ▶ Supportive relationships
- ▶ Special guest lectures
- ▶ Success celebrations
- ▶ Small group discussion



St. Joseph's Area Health Services  
600 Pleasant Ave.  
Park Rapids, MN 56470

On the Web:  
[www.sjahs.org](http://www.sjahs.org)

## A Story of Hope

By Sarah

I am sharing my story with hope that it might touch someone else's life and give them hope. My battle with obesity has been lifelong. At 32, I can say that I am so excited with my new life and the changes that have occurred, both inside and out.

Hello, my name is Sarah, and my personal journey to fight obesity started Oct. 20, 2003. This is the day I decided to have weight loss surgery performed by Dr. Daniel Smith. The days leading up to this decision were some of the hardest of my life.

Growing up obese is one of the most difficult struggles I've faced. The memories of name calling, the unkind actions, and the feelings of rejection were at times almost unbearable.

I had been very open with my family doctor over the years. I tried all the prescriptions that were out there, all the diet pills and many of the weight loss programs available, most more than once. I was able to take some weight off with all the different plans, but was never able to *keep* it off. I was very frustrated and disgusted with where I was with my weight. My obesity wasn't only hurting my health (my knees in particular), but also my relationships with my children, husband, family, and friends. I was unable to get off the floor after changing my daughter's diaper without rolling over and pushing myself up. I couldn't go to a movie because I couldn't fit in the theater seats, and I dreaded the weekends when my children would want to play outside with my husband and me, because I



just didn't have the energy to play with them. I was known to them as the one who cleans, cooks, and takes care of them. My husband got to be the "fun" one because he was able to play with them and do fun things with them. Darn it, I wanted to be in on the fun!

I decided after the birth of my youngest daughter and weighing nearly 300 pounds that I needed to make a life change. My choice to have weight loss surgery was one of the best, most responsible decisions I feel I have ever made. I am very blessed that there have been no complications with my surgery nor with my recovery. I certainly know who is responsible for that: Thank you, God!

I am down 150 pounds, and now I'm able to be in on the fun with my family, go to movies, play outside, and be the fun-loving mom and wife that I've always wanted to be.

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## Make tracks to the ‘Walk from Obesity’



Only two cities in Minnesota will be taking part in the third annual, nationwide “Walk from Obesity” fundraising event set Sept. 24. Park Rapids is one of them. (You’ll have to travel to St. Paul to walk in the other one.)

The “Walk from Obesity” event is sponsored by the American Society for Bariatric Surgery and is designed to

reduce disability, death and discrimination of people who are obese by educating the public and healthcare professionals about effective treatments. Park Rapids joins 75 cities from across the United States in hosting this non-competitive walking fundraiser.

So get ready to put on your walking shoes. Take part in a beneficial cause and get a few miles on your pedometer while you’re at it.

For more information, contact Leah Walters at the St. Joseph’s Center for Weight Management at 218-237-5757.

## ‘Walk from Obesity’

Funds raised through the “Walk from Obesity” event will support the American Society for Bariatric Surgery Foundation’s education mission by:

- ▶ Increasing research funding specifically for severe obesity
- ▶ Improving obesity awareness and reducing its associated discrimination
- ▶ Increasing public education about this devastating disease
- ▶ Increasing professional education concerning effective treatments of the disease.

## Daughter glad to see Mom playing with the kids

### Testimony / from cover

Physically I’m in the best shape of my life. I work out several times a week at the gym and at home.

I know I’ve been given a wonderful “tool,” but I also realize my true successes will come from the personal choices I make with food. I may look like I have won the battle against obesity, but I still have some unhealthy attitudes towards food. I believe now my job is to work on these attitudes and embrace the “tool,”

using the suggestions given to me by Dr. Smith and his friendly, knowledgeable staff.

There have been many positive and inspiring people who have been there for me with their support and constant encouragement. My weight-loss support group has been such a huge factor in my success. Words cannot express my gratitude for my husband, who has always been there for me. I am so thankful for his love, support, and encouragement. I believe God has so many won-

derful plans for my life.

I want to leave you with something my oldest daughter said to me one day when we were playing on the floor a few months ago. She looked over at me, with a look in her eyes that I have never seen before, stopped playing and said to me: “Mom, thank you so much for having surgery so that you can play with us now.” That one sentence has made every bit of this life-changing decision worth it *all!*

### Question: When will I need to follow-up with Dr. Dan Smith?

**Answer:** Follow-up care is essential for your success and well-being after surgery. We will send you home from the hospital with a detailed plan and your first scheduled appointments. After surgery you will be asked to see Dr. Dan Smith and Sandy Jones, Physician Assistant, at about 10 days, one month, three months, six months, and annually for life. We also ask that you do routine follow-up with a Registered Dietitian at about one-to-two months after surgery and as recommended after that.

Other team members like our pharma-



By Leah Walters, RD, LD, CDE

### Follow-up care is a key component to your success after surgery

cists, physical therapists, and counselors are available as needed. Remember, we do not take over your care here. We ask you to continue to see your primary healthcare provider as recommended by that provider.



## My body has changed, but my mind still struggles

Balanced? I don't think so. Has that ever been an adjective used to describe somebody who suffers from an eating disorder? I think my major mistake since weight-loss surgery almost four years ago is that I never balanced my emotional health with my physical health. Because of that, I continue to struggle with a myriad of issues; poor body image, poor self-discipline, poor food choices, poor eating control, poor exercise consistency, and poor life choices.

I lost a hundred pounds during the first two years after surgery. It seems in no time, I regained twenty pounds. (I've read this is quite normal.) But here I am again, wearing clothes too tight to be comfortable and feeling just as fat as pre-surgery. I continue to deal with bulges above my waist, albeit slightly smaller bulges, and feel "fat" in all social obligations. They remain obligations, because it is still uncomfortable to be the biggest person in the room (at least in my mind). I continue to put too much emphasis on the physical.

Regrets? I wish more emphasis had been put on emotional health

### From the Outside In

By  
Cheryl Mickunas



*"I continue to strive for emotional health and hope it will then spill over into physical health to better balance my life."*

and less on physical health throughout my life, but especially before, during, and since bariatric surgery. I continue to strive for emotional health and hope it will then spill over into physical health to better balance my life. C.S. Lewis gives me encouragement in this quote from *Mere Christianity*: "We are not a body with a soul, but rather a soul with a body."

Now if I can just get my teeth around that one.

## Nutrition Nugget

### Tuna Pâté

If you think tuna salad is boring, wait'll you taste this recipe! It's terrific for lunch or for a light summer supper.

2 - 6-oz. cans tuna packed in water, drained  
2 T. low-fat mayonnaise  
2 T. fat-free sour cream  
2 T. fat-free cream cheese, softened  
1/4 t. onion powder (more or less based on preference)  
1 T. fresh lemon juice  
1/4 t. ground pepper  
1/2 t. celery seed  
2 T. parsley, finely chopped

In a food processor, combine all ingredients except parsley and pulse until smooth. Add parsley and pulse just until combined. Transfer pâté to a bowl and refrigerate for at least 1 hour before serving. Makes 4 servings.

*"If you want to make  
an apple pie from scratch,  
you must first create  
the universe."*

Carl Sagan



## We appreciate your input

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. Her e-mail address is [arlyshess@catholichealth.net](mailto:arlyshess@catholichealth.net)

If you choose to no longer receive this newsletter, please call 218-237-5711 or 1-800-566-3311 ext. 588 and ask to have your name removed from the mailing list. Thank you.

CATHOLIC HEALTH  
INITIATIVES

## St. Joseph's Area Health Services

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*For more information about bariatric services  
call our **Center for Weight Management**  
at 1-800-566-3311 or 218-237-5757.*

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# Weight?

B a r i a t r i c s

## Bariatric conference was well worth the trip

by Ilene Hensel, RN, Second South Surgery Unit Manager

I recently had the opportunity to attend a bariatric conference in Hinckley. I would encourage everyone who has had gastric bypass surgery to attend. It's not only a lot of fun but there's plenty to learn. I went as a nurse and as a patient; the experience benefited both of those roles.

The event kicked off with a Friday evening presentation by Ron Lester. He's an actor who has appeared in a couple of movies and television series. He was always cast as the "funny fat guy." He shared his story of going from 508 pounds to a very fit person. That evening there was a pajama party and dance.

The next day started off with Barbara Thompson. She authored, "Finding the Thin Person Hiding Inside You," recommended reading for Dr. Dan Smith's patients. Chef David Fouts was also there, and he gave tips on cooking meals that are well tolerated by gastric bypass patients. Our evening's meal was prepared using his recipes. There were a number of educational breakout sessions on such topics as; getting back on track if you have strayed and put some weight back on;

exercise; plastic surgery to take care of the loose skin; and a variety of other subjects. There were plenty of vendors available so we could sample different protein supplements and vitamins.

After the evening meal (which was included in the cost of the workshop), Colleen Cook spoke. She turned out to be my favorite speaker. She told her story and touched on different speaking events she has done. She was very funny. They also had a fashion show, prize drawings, and a silent auction. The evening closed with another dance.

All of the people attending this event were weight loss surgery patients or those planning to have the surgery, so you get to meet a lot of people and hear a wide range of experiences. I totally enjoyed the whole event and plan to go again. Next year's event will be held in Hinckley again and is scheduled for April 28-29th, 2006. For more information, contact [theresa@wlsec.org](mailto:theresa@wlsec.org). Rooms can be booked at the Grand Casino in Hinckley with discounts given to guests attending the bariatric conference.