

Y Weight?

SPECIAL BABY EDITION
Pregnancy after bariatric surgery

April 2011

A BARIATRIC SERVICE FROM ESSENTIA HEALTH, ST. JOSEPH'S CENTER FOR WEIGHT MANAGEMENT

Do you believe in miracles?



Center of
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BARIATRIC SURGERY

We spoke with four mothers who do

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New staff join
bariatric team / Pg. 7



April concentrated on making healthy choices throughout her pregnancy and breastfeeding



April Earley photographed with her sons, Austin & Carter.

“Having the surgery not only saved my life, but it saved my marriage and my relationship with my son. It gave me my life back.”

*April Earley,
Gastric bypass patient & mom*

April Earley of Fargo was told at age 18 that she would probably never conceive a child due to her weight and health issues. That wasn't quite accurate. It did take more than two years for her and her husband to get pregnant with their first child, Carter.

So she really wasn't expecting to learn she was pregnant only six months following her gastric bypass surgery with Dr. Daniel Smith at the Center for Weight Management in Park Rapids. She had talked to her primary care provider about birth control and chose to use a barrier method.

“I began to cry,” April says when describing the moment she heard the news. “I was scared out of my mind.”

One question consumed her: “What have I done?”

There's no way, she told herself, it's too soon. “I will ruin the surgery and hurt the baby,” she cried. Her mind raced with scenarios.

After consulting with dietitians at the Center and her primary care provider, April learned she wasn't taking in enough calories for her and the baby.

“I had to increase my caloric intake by almost double,” she said. “I was consuming around 800 calories a day prior to the pregnancy and then had to increase to about 1,400 per day,” she says. “That was difficult for me to overcome. I was afraid of gaining weight again since I had been heavy and obese my entire life. Since I had

to gain some weight for the baby to be healthy, I was very careful and picky about what I ate.”

Then the morning sickness hit, leaving April with little that she could eat or drink and keep down.

April wasn't considered high risk with this pregnancy. She weighed 140 pounds versus 300 with her first pregnancy. Her blood pressure was the lowest it had been in a long time.

Delivery was a “breeze,” she adds. Austin Charles was smaller than her first child when he was born on Nov. 22, 2010, and the delivery was faster all around.

Yes, April believes in miracles. She believes both of her babies were such.

April's concerns about the gastric bypass surgery affecting the health of her baby were unfounded. She was extremely careful about the foods she ate and gained about six to seven total pounds.

April breastfeeds and is still diligent about consciously eating and drinking only healthy fare.

April knows that her choice to have the surgery made a difference for her family. She had been unhappy with herself due to the weight. She is now more aware that her family loves her no matter what she weighs.

“(My family) saw me for who I am on the inside,” she says. “Having the surgery not only saved my life, but it saved my marriage and my relationship with my son. It gave me my life back.”



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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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Weight loss boosts fertility after surgery

Women should avoid pregnancy prior to bariatric surgery and/or until their weight-loss stabilizes

“Because of the dramatic weight loss following bariatric surgery, it is generally recommended that women avoid pregnancy until after the first 12-18 months or until their weight stabilizes,” according to a *Bariatric Times* article by Jane Alston and Giselle Hamad, MD, FACS, “Management and Outcomes of Pregnancy following Bariatric Surgery.”

Unexpected pregnancies are a “unique dilemma” for women of childbearing age who have had weight-loss surgery, they say, since weight loss can result in the regulation of ovulation and improved fertility. Additionally, you should have a discussion about birth

control methods with your bariatric surgeon or regular physician. Absorption issues and other factors may diminish the effectiveness of your current birth control method.

Best case scenario, you would share your desire for future pregnancies with your physician or bariatric surgeon before you undergo bariatric surgery. This way, you would be able to have proper contraception in place during your rapid weight loss to decrease your risk of unintended pregnancy.

Even though there are “clearly distinct advantages to bariatric surgery, particularly when compared to the risks of obesity in pregnancy,” much

still remains unknown.

When a bariatric patient becomes pregnant, it is “crucial” that a multidisciplinary approach to care is taken with open communication between you, your bariatric surgeon, obstetrician, and dietitian.

A dietitian should be involved to monitor any deficiencies that may occur. Later in the pregnancy, your doctors should be aware of serious complications that can occur including internal hernias, nausea, and vomiting.

For information on breastfeeding after weight-loss surgery, see Page 6.

Pregnancy after bariatric surgery

- ▶ As you lose weight, you experience a return of fertility as hormones reach natural levels.
- ▶ You should wait 12-18 months after weight-loss surgery before getting pregnant.
- ▶ Have a conversation with your OB physician or a dietitian about nutrition.
- ▶ You may need to educate your OB/GYN.
- ▶ Risks of complications drop, but can still be a concern.
- ▶ Body-image may be a struggle.

Gastric bypass patient believes in miracles; baby was a ‘Christmas gift from God’

Jennifer Harrom of Fergus Falls wanted to have more children; brothers or sisters for her son, Colton. Some day, anyway. In fact, it was her obstetrician who recommended her for weight-loss surgery.

At more than 300 pounds and exhibiting signs of diabetes, high blood pressure and thyroid problems, she had her gastric bypass with Dr. Daniel Smith in 2008.

Thirteen months later she reached her goal weight. Even though she was taking birth control precautions, she discovered on Christmas Eve 2009 that she was pregnant.

“I had very recently just hit my goal weight,” Harrom says. “My husband and I weren’t planning to have another child at the time, but God had other plans for us. Kiersten was our Christmas gift from God.”

Jennifer was concerned that she would eat too much and not be able to keep her weight down, but was confident that her body would be able to physically handle, maintain and provide proper nutrition for the baby.

Having planned to run a half-marathon in May 2009, she made adjustments to her training. At six months pregnant, completed the 10k walk/run instead. After that, she slowed her exercise routine.

“I wish I would have kept with it, so I would have been healthier and not have gained so much weight during the pregnancy.” She is still working to lose that weight.

Jennifer said there weren’t many complications during the pregnancy. However, as the delivery date neared, food would tend to “get stuck randomly.”

“I think that was more painful than the actual labor and delivery,” she laughs.

As a result of surgery, Jennifer claims to have a whole new life and is a better mom as a result.

“I am now a single mother, and I know that I would not have been able to do that with the energy of a 300-lb woman. The surgery has saved mine and my kids’ lives.”



Jennifer Harrom with Kiersten RoyNell

“My husband and I weren’t planning to have another child... but God had other plans for us.”

Jennifer Harrom, Gastric bypass patient & mom

Bariatric surgery leads to miracle after couple had given up dreams of a family



Franki and David Evensen of Bigfork with daughter, Isabella Brin.

"I am so happy with the way I look and how I feel after surgery - even after my pregnancy. It is really nice to be able to keep up with my growing toddler."

Franki Evensen,
Gastric bypass patient
& mom

Franki Evensen's excess weight had affected her fertility, but she hadn't realized that until she lost 100 pounds and became pregnant.

In 2008, she had her Roux-en-Y gastric bypass surgery with Dr. Daniel Smith.

"I had not been on any type of birth control since 2003," she said.

At one time, she and her husband had tried to have children, but never saw a fertility specialist. She and her husband accepted the fact that they would probably never conceive.

A year following her surgery, Franki had dropped 100 pounds before she got stomach flu-like symptoms.

"When the doctor told me I was pregnant, it was the last thing I expected to hear," Franki acknowledged.

Her initial reaction was shock. Then she was scared: she was 38 years old at the time and her husband, as a cancer survivor, had received radiation therapy.

But once it started to sink in, "I felt sheer elation!"

The pregnancy

Every pregnancy is unique, and Franki will admit hers wasn't easy.

"One of the most challenging problems I had throughout the pregnancy was that I continued to lose weight until shortly before the end of the pregnancy," she says. "In the end I only gained a total of 12 pounds."

At 10 weeks she was sitting in an emergency room and thought she was losing her baby. She was sent home with instructions to perform only light duties.

At 22 weeks they were delighted to discover they would be having a baby girl.

At 26 weeks, Franki woke in the night with stomach pains. Within hours she was on a Life-Link chopper flight to Duluth.

The pains were, in fact, labor pain. Franki was in premature labor.

She spent the next two months in Duluth on IV therapy to keep her contractions under control. Eventually she was allowed to return home. One more event sent her back to Duluth, by ambulance this time. Two days later on Nov. 3, 2009, a

healthy Isabella Brin was born 5 weeks early weighing 4 pounds, 14 ounces. After all that happened, "Bella" was a healthy baby girl with no further complications.

"I absolutely believe in miracles and that my daughter was one of them," Franki says.

"Against all odds she is healthy, very happy, and

perfect in every way."

She makes no apologies: "What mother doesn't think that about her child?"

Franki was able to breastfeed Isabella for seven months, and says she appreciates that "incredible bonding experience" with her daughter.

Franki asked her husband, David, his thoughts on her gastric bypass surgery.

"Well, it was life-changing, a 180-degree turnaround, for both of us," he answered. "Everything good that has happened to us has happened since you had surgery."

Franki had never thought of it in that way.

"He was completely right. It *was* a life-altering process, but it is one that I feel was so worth it. I am so happy I no longer struggle with my weight," she says.

"I now have a beautiful, healthy daughter who was the most adorable flower girl when, after more than 12 years as a couple, Dave and I were married on Oct. 23, 2010."

To date Franki maintains a weight-loss of 130 pounds.



Pregnancy after weight-loss surgery

Coordination of care recommended for weight-loss surgery OB patients

It is generally recommended that women avoid pregnancy the first 12 to 18 months after bariatric surgery because of the dramatic weight loss. Once pregnant, patients should be monitored to be sure appropriate weight gain is occurring. Prenatal care is coordinated with the obstetrician, the bariatric surgeon and dietitian (1).

Energy needs

▶ You will need to increase calories by 300 to 500 calories for a total of 1,500 to 1,800 calories per day in the second and third trimesters. You will need to ensure that you get 71 grams of protein per day. This is not the time to lose additional weight. Ideally, you should gain the recommended weight (15 to 20 pounds) in order to develop a healthy fetus (2).

▶ Fat: Dietary source of Docosahexaenoic Acid (DHA) is desirable; evaluate cold water fish intake and consider a DHA supplement if consuming less than two servings per week. This recommendation meets the Food and Drug Administration safety guideline to limit the fish consumption to two 6-oz. servings (12 oz. total) during pregnancy and lactation (2).

▶ To avoid nausea, eat small meals throughout the day and separate solid meals from liquids (3).

▶ To assure adequate calories and protein, patients may need to consume three meals and three snacks per day (2).

▶ A liquid protein supplement can be used in addition to oral intake to help meet daily caloric and protein needs, especially if nausea is a concern (3).

Vitamin & mineral needs

It is important to supplement to optimize fetal growth. Continue with our recommended vitamin and

mineral supplement list with the following tips:

▶ Take a complete sugar-free multivitamin/mineral two times per day. A prenatal vitamin is not necessary (2).

▶ Be sure your vitamin A is less than 10,000 IU per day. Check the amount in your multivitamin (4).

▶ Ferrous Fumerate is found to be the best tolerated and most effective iron supplementation when the duodenum is bypassed. Take 30 to 65 mg of ferrous fumerate with vitamin C (1).

▶ Calcium supplements are needed for mineralization of the fetal skeleton. We recommend calcium citrate 1,200 to 1,500 mg/day (1).

▶ Take folic acid supplements to avoid neural tube abnormalities. Add together dosage in multivitamins, B complex, and supplement to a total dose of 400 mg at minimum. You may need to get a prescription from a physician (1).

▶ Take B12 1,000 mcg per day sublingually (2).

▶ Take B-Complex ensuring at least 100 mg Thiamine (B1) per day (2).

Important Points

▶ Glucose tolerance testing should not be performed. The test is potentially dangerous after surgery, the results are difficult to interpret and useless (1).

▶ Use of vitamin and mineral supplements is very important (1).

▶ Nutritional deficiencies can be avoided with good medical and pre-natal care (1).

▶ Consider breastfeeding as the best option to keep your baby/child at a healthy weight for life (4).

“This is not the time to lose additional weight. Ideally you should gain the recommended weight (15 to 20 pounds) in order to develop a healthy fetus.”

Karla Lund, LRD,
Essentia Health

References

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Breastfeeding after bariatric surgery

by Mari Willie, Certified Lactation Counselor

Breast is Best.

There is no denying that a majority of the population knows breastfeeding is best for babies, but keep in mind the statement doesn't say, "Breast is easy."

There are few research studies dealing with breastfeeding after bariatric surgery. What we know is what we have seen; healthy breastfed babies receiving milk from mothers who have had bariatric surgery.

There are studies of babies who nurse in countries in which adequate nutrition is in short supply and vitamins aren't available for mothers, yet these babies thrive.

That said, there are a few things mom can do to make breastfeeding successful:

- ▶ Take all vitamins as recommended post bariatric surgery.
- ▶ Breastfeed early, often and without restriction (within the first hour after birth and 8-12 times every 24 hours).

▶ Position baby correctly - mom will be less sore and baby will get milk more efficiently. This is where a knowledgeable, supportive health professional can really help.

▶ Breastfeed one breast well; offer both breasts - the more baby nurses the more milk mom will make; if a breast is fully emptied the body knows to make more milk.

▶ Avoid supplementing with artificial milk unless medically necessary.

▶ Assess signs of effective breastfeeding: audible swallowing, stools, wet diapers, weight gain, and breast softening after a feeding.

Surround yourself with supportive people: friends, family, and/or health care providers. There are breastfeeding experts in most hospitals and clinics who are certified in lactation education. Do *NOT* be shy to ask for help!

Surgery results in unexpected gift

"I probably wouldn't have been able to have him if I hadn't had the surgery."

Melanie Stauty, Gastric bypass patient & mom

Melanie Stauty of Fergus Falls sits in a clinic chair during a follow-up bariatric appointment at Essentia Health Park Rapids.

On her lap sits a bouncing baby boy, Seth Alexander and, gosh, his smile is infectious.

"He was a miracle," Melanie says. "I didn't think I would have any more children."

In fact, when she had the surgery at age 25, one of Melanie's greatest worries was that if she didn't lose her excess weight, she wouldn't be around for her 9-year-old son.

On Aug. 31, 2006, Melanie had her surgery at St. Joseph's Center for Weight Management. She lost 230 pounds in two years.

Melanie had not been on birth control and soon found out she was pregnant. Considered high risk, the pregnancy was monitored closely by her OB physician in



Melanie Stauty and son, Seth Alexander

Fergus Falls. Following a long labor, Seth was delivered by c-section.

Melanie was concerned about weight gain, but also wanted to eat well on behalf of her baby.

"I ate as much as I could for him," she says. She watched her protein intake and took her vitamins including potassium and calcium.

Her blood was monitored

every other month.

Weight being a concern, especially for bariatric patients, Melanie has done well to lose all but 10 pounds of her pregnancy weight. She was also able to breastfeed Seth, and she assures other bariatric moms: "It can be done."

Although Melanie wasn't trying to get pregnant, she is firm in her beliefs that Seth was a "miracle from God."

"He probably wouldn't be here if I hadn't had the surgery," she says.

Norby brings expertise as physician assistant, family nurse practitioner

Brenda Norby, PA-C, FNP, joined the bariatric surgical team at the Center for Weight Management recently with the retirement of Sandy Jones, PA-C. (See article below.)



Brenda Norby, PA-C

Norby came to Essentia Health Park Rapids in October 2009 when she started working with Family Medicine physicians at the clinic and St. Joseph's Area Health Services.

"Seeing patients take charge of their own health care, asking questions, and challenging themselves to live healthy, happy lives is the biggest motivation I have in my practice," she says.

Norby received her physician assistant degree from the University of North Dakota, Grand Forks, ND, and completed a preceptorship in Family

Medicine at St. James Family Clinic in St. James.

She is certified by the National Commission on Certification of Physician Assistants and is a member of the Minnesota Association of Physician Assistants and the American Association of Physician Assistants.

Prior to her arrival in Park Rapids, Norby garnered 25 years of experience and served with United Medical Clinic/Avera in Windom.

Her husband, Steve, is Pastor at Calvary Lutheran Church in Park Rapids, and they have five children. Special interests include going to their children's music and sporting events, church activities, and being together as a family. They have also enjoyed the privilege of providing foster care to several children.

"Seeing patients take charge of their own health care, asking questions, and challenging themselves to live healthy, happy lives is the biggest motivation I have in my practice."

Brenda Norby, PA-C

New dietitian loves to 'help people help themselves'

St. Joseph's Center for Weight Management welcomed certified dietitian, Jennifer Skoog, RD, LD, CDE, to the team in March.

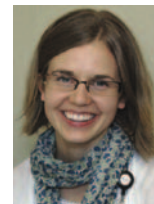
Skoog is a 2006 graduate of the University of

Minnesota and went on to earn her credentials from the National Certification Board of Diabetes Educators.

From 2008 to 2010, Skoog gained experience as a dietitian at

Mt. Edgecumbe Hospital in Sitka, AK.

Skoog loves the personal contact and education she can provide and especially when she can "help people help themselves."



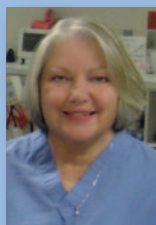
Jennifer Skoog, RD, LD, CDE

Sandy Jones, PA-C retires; we're throwing a card party

Bariatric surgery is not the easy way out, and Sandy Jones, PA-C, understands that as well as anyone.

Her medical career brought her to the Center for Weight

Management in its early days and when it was initially accredited by the American Society for



Sandy Jones, PA-C

Metabolic and Bariatric Surgery as a Center of Excellence. During that time she has become a grounding force for hundreds of patients on their weight-loss journeys.

While Jones has officially retired from her full-time schedule at Essentia Health, she will likely continue to see patients on occasion.

The Center for Weight Management will be throwing a card shower as a way to thank her

for her dedication to patients and to honor her years of service. If you would like to share your thoughts, please send a card to Sandy in care of: Arlys Hess at St. Joseph's Center for Weight Management, 600 Pleasant Ave, Park Rapids, MN 56470. If you would prefer to put your thoughts in an e-mail, send it to:

arlyshess@catholicealth.net

All messages should be received by April 15.

St. Joseph's Area Health Services

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Y Weight?



Bariatric calendar of events

Y Weight? support group

- April 14:** "Dangers of Grazing," discussion.
- April 28:** "Band Practice - Exercising with Bands," with Missy Lindow, PTA.
- May 12:** "Feeding Your Soul - with Non-Food Rewards," discussion.
- May 26:** "Vitamin & Supplement Review," with Leah Walters, RD, LD, CDE.
- June 9:** "Portion Sizes," discussion.
- June 23:** Game Night, "Wheel of Fortune."
- July 14:** "Making Health Choices - Dining Out in a Healthy Way," discussion.
- July 28:** "Getting Where You Want to Be!"
- Aug. 11:** Open Discussion.

Y Weight? support group meetings are held at 4:30 p.m. on the second and fourth Thursdays of the month in Lower Level Conference Rooms B & C. Check out our website at www.weightmanagementmn.com for updated

support group information or to find a support group in your community.

Dates to remember

- Aug. 8:** Northwoods Triathlon in Nevis. Watch the Center for Weight Management's sprint triathlon teams and individuals swim, bike and run.
- Oct. 7&8:** Annual Retreat. Take in the fall splendor in the Smokey Hills during the Center for Weight Management's fall retreat. Traditionally we have hosted this retreat as the "Weekend in the Pines." This year, we expect to switch up our game and give the weekend a feel of "boot camp." We will give your workout routines a boost, get you back to the POWER basics, motivate, and infuse new energy into your commitment to staying healthy. Watch for more information as the fall retreat list of events take shape.