



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



## St. Joseph's Center for Weight Management named **Center of Excellence** by the American Society for Bariatric Surgery

### Here to support you

The mission of the Y Weight gastric bypass support group newsletter 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



### Dr. Smith, bariatrics team earns distinction

Dr. Daniel Smith was in the middle of gastric bypass surgery recently when he heard the news.

A surgical nurse read the letter from the American Society for Bariatric Surgery (ASBS) designating The Center for Weight Management in Park Rapids (sponsored by St. Joseph's Area Health Services and Dakota Clinic) as a Bariatric Surgery Center of Excellence.

Onlookers peered through the tiny operating room door windows to catch his reaction. Needless to say, everyone was excited. Word spread quickly, creating a buzz throughout the hospital and clinic.

To earn the Center of Excellence distinction, Smith, who specializes in a laposcopic, Roux en-Y gastric bypass procedure, and his team underwent a site inspection in which all aspects of the program's surgical processes and health outcomes were scrutinized. (Smith found the process especially interesting in that he had some significant

input in fashioning the criteria in the area of critical care that was subsequently adopted by the ASBS for their national standards.)

The ASBS awarded St. Joseph's a three-year designation. They recognized The Center for Weight Management for its proven track record and favorable outcomes. The three-year designation is reserved for those applicants who meet or exceed the requirements as outlined by the ASBS.

"The fact that we earned this Center of Excellence status is a very viable confirmation of the outstanding care provided by this team," Smith says.

He notes that St. Joseph's weight management team (made up of surgical and non-surgical support professionals) derives its uniqueness from the fact that they've maintained a very "tight-knit" core group of individuals committed to providing out-



*“The fact that we earned this Center of Excellence status is a very viable confirmation of the outstanding care provided by this team.”*



Dr. Daniel Smith,  
Surgeon

standing care to patients. “Members of the group are available 24-7 to deal with any questions or problems patients may have,” he says. Together their hard work and high standards paid off.

The Center of Excellence application process started more than a year ago. “We started with a solid program,” says Peter Jacobson, St. Joseph’s president/CEO. Some program modifications and preparations were made to meet all of ASBS’s requirements, “but the outcome statistics we had were already there,” he says.

“They make sure that you’ve got the proper organizational components and can provide high quality care. They also measure outcomes you’ve achieved in terms of safety for patients as well as the impact on the patients’ health status,” Jacobson says. “In both cases, we’ve had exceptional results.”

### **Economic impact**

“For Park Rapids, a relatively small community, to be included along with hospitals from the metro area is pretty impressive,” Jacobson says, The new status approved by the ASBS serves as an affirmation for the level of achievement reached by the staff and renews optimism for The Center for Weight Management’s ability to grow.

Dr. Larry Leadbetter, internal medicine specialist at St. Joseph’s and Dakota, serves on the Dakota Clinic/Innovis Health Board of Directors in Fargo. He learned the Dakota system would be encouraging their physicians to refer bariatric patients to the Park Rapids site.

“Physicians from the entire Dakota system see Park Rapids as the referral center for their weight loss patients,” Leadbetter says. “This is an excellent opportunity for medical growth in the community. There are many added benefits that this program helps to provide.”

Currently patients come to St. Joseph’s for weight loss surgery locally, from across the state, as well as North Dakota, South Dakota, Wisconsin, Iowa, Canada and beyond. The Center of Excellence designation will likely garner more potential patients from a broader region, Jacobson predicts. “This is good news for patients and, from an economic development standpoint, retaining this program and building on it will add jobs to this community and enhance the economy.”

### **Numbers talk**

Smith reports he has conducted more than 1,300 gastric bypass procedures and maintains a complication rate which stands significantly better than the national average. While complications are possible with any surgery, the rate of complications from surgery performed at a bariatric surgery Center of Excellence such as St. Joseph’s is extremely low.

St. Joseph’s patients who have been tracked for five years have lost and maintained an average of 70 to 80 percent of their excess body weight (EBW). This exceeds the industry

standard of 50 to 60 percent (EBW) lost and maintained at five years.

Rates of reversal of co-morbidities (health problems associated with obesity) have been very good. For St. Joseph’s post-operative patients with diabetes, 75 to 80 percent of them are off all insulin and diabetic medication within 18 months of having surgery.

In addition, most patients no longer need the Continuous Positive Airway Pressure (CPAP) machines for their sleep apnea condition.

Results from a recent 18-month *Health Condition and Quality of Life survey* revealed that Smith’s patients demonstrated improved condition status in regard to high blood pressure, joint problems, edema, urinary incontinence, respiratory problems, issues with the heart, headaches, depression, anxiety and fatigue.

Respondents to the survey also noted their quality of life changed for the better: their ability/willingness to work improved for 78 percent of patients; 91 percent now participate in an exercise regime; and 75 percent report their social life has improved.

Leah Walters, bariatrics coordinator and dietitian at The Center for Weight Management, says if patients had any reservations about this program, the Center of Excellence designation should put them even more at ease. In addition, insurance companies are more likely to approve surgeries specifically at facilities which have Center of Excellence status.

### **Surgical Review Corp.**

According to a study released in July, 2005 by the Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality, the number of U.S. bariatric surgeries more than quadrupled between 1998 and 2002 - from 13,386 to 71,733.

Faced with clinical evidence that the most experienced and best-run bariatric surgery programs have the lowest rates of complications, the ASBS Centers of Excellence program was created to improve the quality and safety of care provided. Dr. Smith and his staff must adhere to the rigorous standards formulated by the Surgical Review Corporation. Their website at [www.surgicalreview.org](http://www.surgicalreview.org) hosts an updated list of all approved centers which patients can review.

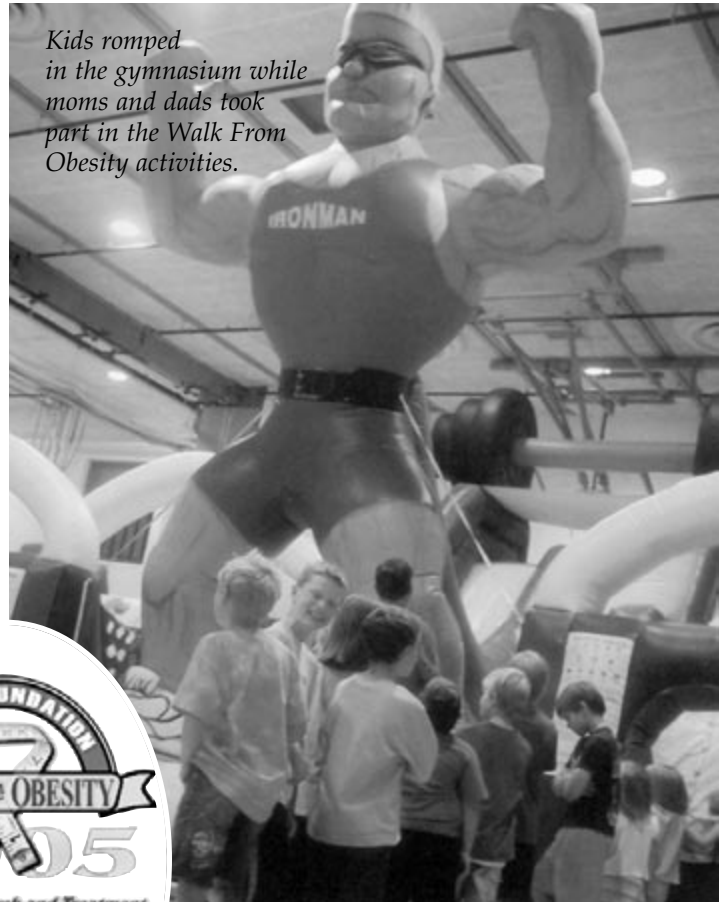
Those considering weight loss surgery should understand it’s not a quick fix; it’s most effective when paired with lifestyle changes. The Center for Weight Management offers a surgical and non-surgical component. Its support program promotes smart diet choices and exercise. They also take care to address a patient’s psychological and social habits. Anyone with questions can call 218-237-5757 or 1-800-566-3311 and ask for Leah. For more information, visit St. Joseph’s website at [www.sjahs.org](http://www.sjahs.org).



Success Walk participant, David Jenkins of Deer Creek, said he's lost 220 pounds and is still going...



Kids romped in the gymnasium while moms and dads took part in the Walk From Obesity activities.



More than 150 walkers participated in the event to raise \$2,000.



Congratulations to all who participated in our first Walk From Obesity!

Larry Peterson was an inspiration to others.



## 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.

Named a *Center of Excellence* by the American Society for Bariatric Surgery



### The Center for Weight Management

A service of St. Joseph's Area Health Services  
600 Pleasant Avenue Park Rapids, MN 56470  
Phone: (218) 732-3311 Fax: (218) 732-1368

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 r i a t r i c s

### 2006 Y Weight Support Group schedule

Meetings are held at 4:30 p.m. in SJAHs basement conference room on the 2nd and 4th Thursdays of the month.

- ▶ **Jan. 12:** "Setting Weight Loss Goals," with discussion, "The Holidays - How'd We Do?"
- ▶ **Jan. 27:** Protein taste-testing session (Bring your favorite protein supplement with instructions - where bought, cost, a recipe - and enough to share with everyone. Serving cups provided.)
- ▶ **Feb. 9:** "Developing Good Eating Habits," with recipe exchange
- ▶ **Feb. 23:** Guest Mary Beth Anderson, Merry Bees Clothing Store with "What's the Right Fit?"
- ▶ **March 9:** "The Value of Veggies," with Mari Kadow, RD, SJAHs / Clothing exchange
- ▶ **March 23:** Special Guest with "Addictions and Addictive Behaviors"
- ▶ **April 13:** "The Dangers of Carbonation," and small group discussion
- ▶ **April 27:** Cooking demonstration by Monica Foster, RD, SJAHs
- ▶ **May 11:** "Regular Exercise - Just Do It," with small group discussion
- ▶ **May 25:** Amy Erickson, Exercise Physiologist, SJAHs with "What's a fitness center all about? Would it work for me?" (Meet in Cardiac Rehab. at St. Joseph's)

**Question:** How many times per day should I eat after my surgery?

**Answer:** We recommend personalizing your diet plan after surgery. We usually consider "grazing" more than six small meals consumed per day. Grazing is the number one reason some patients don't achieve their weight loss goal.

Food journaling, dietitian assessment of calories and talking to a mental health professional about comfort eating can all help.

With the holidays upon us,



By Leah Walters,  
RD, LD, CDE

### Grazing will prevent you from achieving your weight loss goals

let's all make an effort to celebrate with healthy foods and more activities such as caroling, snowshoeing, crafts, or cards. Leave the cookies for Santa!

**Reminder:** The next "Back on Track" session will begin Jan. 12. Space is limited, so please call 237-5757 to register.