



# Weight?

November, 2007

THE CENTER FOR WEIGHT MANAGEMENT

## Thiamine for the rest of your life

Plus, what you need  
to know about your  
vitamins... Pages 2, 3

## Surgery patients live longer... Page 4

## *The New You!* is coming...

Page 6

## Triathlon winners!

Surgical weight loss  
patients dig deep,  
inspire... Page 5



# The best way to 'B' healthy is to take your vitamins, thiamine every day for life

**By Diane J. Rhody**  
Dietetic Intern

Remember that first educational session at The Center for Weight Management when the dietitian kept repeating the advice to take your B-100 vitamins?

We tell people to take their Bs, but we often forget to really explain why it's so important to take them; and why taking thiamine is so important everyday for the rest of your life.

What is thiamine?


It's one of the B-complex of vitamins and is also known as B1. It is important in nerve function, energy production, and helps keep your heart beating.

Thiamine's importance was first discovered in 1910 in Japan as a cure for the disease, beriberi (translated, "I can't, I can't"). Beriberi caused people to waste away, have pain, nerve damage, heart failure, paralysis,

## Thiamine's vital benefits

- ▶ Nerve function
- ▶ Energy production
- ▶ Heart function

## Did you know?

 Some studies suggest that taking thiamine may reduce mosquito bites. Thiamine produces a skin odor that is not detectable by humans, but is disagreeable to female mosquitoes. New Thiamine-based repellents are on the market, although there is no clinical evidence yet to back their effectiveness.

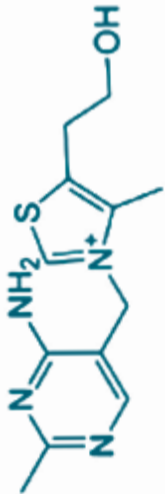
edema, and eventually death.

Later, thiamine was found to be an important nutrient that is deficient in alcoholics who have Wernicke's encephalopathy. Soon after that, the same deficiency was found in those who had undergone gastric bypass surgery.

To avoid the grim future possibility of Wernicke's encephalopathy and the quickly following beriberi, a simple routine of taking your B vitamins can be adopted so one never has to experience the unpleasant and ill effects of a thiamine deficiency. In any normal person, daily needs for thiamine range from 1-1.4 mg, but needs for the bariatric patient are greater, and the B-100 vitamins adequately cover those needs.

Foods that block the absorption of thiamine should be avoided. These foods include an excess of raw shellfish as well as tea and coffee. Tea and coffee should be avoided in any case due to their caffeine content.

Happiness is a healthy nervous system, energy to digest your food, and a heart that beats; all made possible by the important intake of thiamine.



## Youth sought to participate in 'Healthy 'n Fit Kids' program

If you have a child or know a child ages 10 through 15 who would be interested in participating in a weight management program geared for youth, let them know about The Center for Weight Management's "Healthy 'n Fit Kids" program.

St. Joseph's Area Health Services received a \$10,000 grant from Dakota Medical Foundation to support this multidisciplinary adolescent

weight management program.

It's not too late to join. To learn more, or to sign up, please call St. Joseph's and Dakota Clinic's Center for Weight Management at (218) 237-5757, option 2.

Dakota Medical Foundation of Fargo focuses its efforts on improving health and access to medical and dental care in the region, with an emphasis on kids.



Center of  
Excellence  
BARIATRIC SURGERY

CATHOLIC HEALTH  
INITIATIVES

## The Center for Weight Management

A service of St. Joseph's Area Health Services

600 Pleasant Avenue  
Phone: (218) 732-3311

Park Rapids, MN 56470  
Fax: (218) 732-1368

## 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](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. Also, drop us a line if you have a change of address you would like us to know about. Thank you.

## What you need to know about your vitamins...

Be sure to look for the following items when selecting vitamins and supplements. Some ingredients are hidden more than others, and it's vital to your health that you select appropriate vitamins and supplements.

**REMEMBER:** You need to take these for the rest of your life!

### Sorting through the Multivitamin Mayhem:

Chewable - Adult or Children's is acceptable  
 Complete - Look for this KEY word on the label  
 Vitamin D - 400 IU to help with calcium absorption  
 Take 2 a day - 1 in the morning, and 1 later

**Some options:** Flintstones Complete, Centrum Kids Complete, One a Day Kids Complete, Wal-Mart's One Source Active Kids, or another generic equivalent.

**Remember:** Your multivitamin does not come close to making up for an unhealthy diet. It is merely a nutritional safety net.

### Clearing up the Calcium Confusion:

There are 2 types: citrate and carbonate

Citrate with Vitamin D is recommended. Citrate can be taken with or without food. Without food, it may decrease iron absorption, so take separately.

Take 2 - 3 a day at different times (your body can only absorb 500-600mg at a time) for a total of 1200-1500mg daily.

**Chewable**

**Some Options:** Citrical, Chewables, Bariatric Advantage lozenges or a generic equivalent.

### "B" Healthy with your B-Complex:

**Thiamine!** The complex MUST have this invaluable vitamin - 100mg is desirable  
 Take 1 a day - you may need to split or divide the dose.

Available from several brands in various forms; liquids often have no thiamine. Bariatric Advantage has smaller capsules you can take whole, but you need 2-4 per day.

### B12 and beyond:

Sublingual form (most readily absorbed) or nasogel.

Take 1000 mcg daily. Blood levels drawn should be twice the "normal level" due to malabsorption.

### "Ironing" out the Iron:

Chewable is most tolerable  
 Vitamin C helps absorption

**Women:** Ferrous fumarate or ferronyl in dose as needed and discussed with physician. DO take daily during menstrual cycle and 2 days after or as directed.

**Men:** An iron supplement may be necessary without proper nutrition; take as directed.

**Some Options:** Bariatric Advantage, Vitron C.

## Dr. Dan Smith begins LAP-BAND® procedures on patients

Starting Nov. 2, Dr. Dan Smith added LAP-BAND® System procedures to the list of offerings at The Center for Weight Management. It is available to patients who meet the criteria for this surgery.

While the Roux en-Y procedure for gastric bypass surgery is considered the gold standard in the bariatric industry and is one in which Dr. Smith stands out with success rates above the national average, the LAP-BAND® gives morbidly obese patients a choice when considering their options to dramatically improve their health. A non-surgical option is also available to patients through the LEARN Program.

The LAP-BAND® System is an adjustable gastric band designed to help you lose excess body weight. It reduces the stomach capacity and restricts the amount of food that can



Dr. Dan Smith

be consumed at one time.

The LAP-BAND® procedure doesn't require stomach cutting and stapling or gastrointestinal re-routing to bypass normal digestion. During the procedure, a silicone ring is placed around the upper part of the stomach and filled with saline in its inner surface. This creates a new, smaller stomach pouch that can hold only a small amount of food, so the food storage area in the stomach is reduced. The band also controls the stoma between the new upper pouch and the lower part of the stomach.

Once in place, an access port fixed beneath the skin of your abdomen allows LAP-BAND®-certified physicians such as Dr. Smith to change the stoma size by adding or subtracting saline. The diameter of the band can be modified to meet individual needs.

Dr. Robert Wroblewski will also perform LAP-BAND® surgeries upon his arrival to The Center for Weight Management in 2008.

# Report conclusive: obese adults live longer after gastric bypass surgery

The news is good for gastric bypass patients. According to the *Boston Globe* (Aug. 23, 2007), patients who lost weight as a result of bypass surgery will live longer.

For the first time, the article states, “researchers have conclusively shown that losing weight through stomach surgery can extend the lives of severely obese patients, dramatically reducing deaths from heart disease, cancer, and diabetes.”

Physicians who conducted the research say the results are “so dramatic that they could spawn a major shift in who is eligible for weight-loss surgery.” Their findings appeared in *The New England Journal of Medicine*.

At The Center for Weight Management in Park Rapids, Dr. Daniel Smith performs the Roux en-Y, considered to be the gold standard of all gastric bypass surgeries. It is considered a last resort option for morbidly obese patients with a BMI of 40 or higher or who have health-related problems as a result of excess weight and are desperate to lose weight.

The operation has been found to improve and reverse co-morbidities and other problems associated with obesity such as heart disease, diabetes, high blood pressure, high cholesterol, sleep apnea, and arthritis.

Until these studies were conducted, the official medical word was inconclusive as to whether the

**From *The New England Journal of Medicine***  
Aug. 23, 2007

**Conclusion statement:**  
... “Thus, the question as to whether intentional weight loss (bariatric surgery) improves life span has been answered and the answer appears to be a resounding yes.”

surgery prolonged life.

The findings from these studies may cause a shift in eligibility for weight-loss surgeries, the article states.

Apparently two studies conducted independently of one another, both in Sweden and Utah, followed the progress of 20,000 obese patients. Those who lost weight through surgical methods were close to 40 percent more likely to be alive later than those who tried conventional methods to lose weight.

The *Globe* reported Dr. Lars Sjostrom saying the answer as to why there was health improvements for the bypass patients remains unclear. He says it could be the loss of weight or something having to do with the manipulation of the digestive tract during surgery. Finding out that answer will be “pivotal,” Sjostrom says.



## Q & A With Leah Walters, Bariatric Coordinator & Dietitian

**Question:** Why is exercise so important? I am losing weight without it.

**Answer:** It is almost impossible not to lose weight in the early phases after bariatric surgery.

We find that patients who choose not to exercise lose more muscle mass.

When that muscle (lean body mass) is gone, it is difficult to build back. And please remember that the lean body mass determines your total caloric need each day. The more muscle, the more calories you need and the more subsequent weight loss you will experience with your low calorie diet.

Leah Walters,  
RD, LD, CDE

## Swim, ride, run

# Six amazing bariatric surgery patients ‘win’ triathlon

Others finished before them, many others, but the six women (two teams) who entered the Northwoods Triathlon in Nevis in August were winners in every regard.

These six challenged themselves to compete in a race all but one would never have considered a possibility a year ago.

The story of these particular six competitors is one of personal gain. Well, that *and* loss.

The logo on their warm-up suits reads: “The Center for Weight Management,” a service of St. Joseph’s Area Health Services and Dakota Clinic. All have undergone gastric bypass surgery and collectively lost more than 500 pounds.

Short of two hours after the start, Leah Walters, The Center for Weight Management Coordinator, wipes away tears as a grinning Hannah Gurno of Cloquet charges through the finish line. Each woman has finished their leg of the race. While many went into the race with a personal goal of simply surviving, as it turns out none had finished last.

“I am *so* proud of them,” Walters beams.

Days before the race, Linda Hanson was mentally getting herself pumped. For years she has been associated with the triathlon, but in the role of volunteer at the finish line. She has lost 110 pounds since her surgery 19 months ago and started running in December.

“The first year I volunteered for the triathlon, I thought to myself: I want to do that some day,” Hanson says. Watching from the sidelines, she was always inspired by the competitors. “My heart was there, it was just that my body wasn’t. Now I think they’re both there. I’m ready.” She is amazed by what she has been able to accomplish.

“I am so thankful because I have my life back. This has been such an amazing journey,” Hanson adds. “Mentally, I’m healthier. Physically, I’m definitely healthier, and I know I’m going to live a whole lot longer. This is the best decision I’ve ever made in my whole entire life. I have absolutely no regrets, and would do it again (have the surgery) in a heartbeat.” Her eyes are on next year’s triathlon; next time as a solo competitor. The minute she crossed the finish line she became



Connie Nygaard, (l to r) Linda Hanson and Cathy Hensel make up the team, “New Beginnings.”



Abby Rolffs, (l to r) Hannah Gurno and Lisa Schneider, all related, made exercise a family tradition.

an inspiration for others.

It took effort for Connie Nygaard of Fergus Falls to go up and down stairs prior to her surgery. “I was not a happy camper,” she says, having shed 120-pounds in excess body weight. “I was not feeling good and was frustrated with how my life was turning out. Today is about me for once in my life, and I want that to be my own motivation. I want to be an inspiration to myself.”

Following a quarter of a mile swim around the big, orange buoys, Nygaard’s smile was priceless as she waded out of the water. Nygaard holds every intention of sticking to an exercise routine. Let’s just say she’s become addicted. She, too, vows to enter the triathlon as a soloist next year.

Abby Rolffs of Lake Lillian was another team member to emerge from the swim with a new sense of pride. She’s lost 80 pounds since December. Her team, “Becuz We can!,” was a scene from *All in the Family*. Rolffs, Gurno (a cousin) and Lisa Schneider of Willmar (a sister) are all related. In addition, they also had two aunts and a cousin competing. Weight loss and better health is their new family tradition.

Having met their goals with a triathlon team effort under their shrinking belts, they are encouraged by similar challenges. As with all of these women-turned-triathletes, their stories of transformation are still unfolding.

*Note: For a full version of this story and more photos, see St. Joseph’s Area Health Services’ website at: [www.sjahs.org](http://www.sjahs.org). Click under Services/Bariatric.*

## 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



Non-Profit Org.  
U.S. Postage  
PAID  
Park Rapids, MN  
Permit No. 52

Address Service Requested



### Take Note

#### ***The New You!***

On Dec. 13, the *Y Weight?* Support Group will be focusing on 'The New You!'

Participants' successes will be celebrated by giving them an opportunity to briefly share their "before surgery" story and picture with other attendees. It is a chance to inspire others and mark the incredible progress you and others have made in changing your lives.

Anyone interested in participating should please send a "before surgery" picture to Arlys Hess at St. Joseph's Area Health Services, 600 Pleasant Ave., Park Rapids, MN 56470, or to [arlyshess@catholichealth.net](mailto:arlyshess@catholichealth.net).

By sending a picture, participants are consenting to read their story to the group while the "before" picture is being shown on a video screen.

If participants do not have a "before" picture to share, they are welcome to hold or wear "before" clothing as they tell their short story.

Please have your pictures to Arlys by Dec. 6. We will be looking forward to seeing you at the Dec. 13

meeting from 4:30 – 5:30 p.m. (Support group meetings are held at St. Joseph's Area Health Services basement meeting room.)

#### **In support of support**

Research is showing that participation in a support group after weight loss surgery promotes on-going weight loss/maintenance success. The Center for Weight Management also conducts training sessions for support group leaders located in your neck of the woods. Anyone interested in starting a new support group in your town outside of The Center for Weight Management's service area or to find a support group near you, call Arlys at 218-237-5588 or 1-800-566-3311.

#### **Retreat/Walk combined event**

Watch for information on the Fall 2008 Weight Loss Retreat/Walk From Obesity combined event in future *Y Weight?* newsletters.