

Patient Blog: Big Decision, Big Changes

Here I am - almost a year post-op from my surgery last October, and I can't believe this new me I see in the mirror. Having gastric bypass was one of the biggest decisions I've ever made in my life. It's personal. It's scary. It's an elective surgery.

I had so many questions. Would I even qualify? How do I start the process? Will I be successful? Am I ready to make permanent changes in my life in order to be a healthier and happier me? Do I have the right support system? I didn't quite know all of these answers when I started this journey, but I did it! I took the plunge and went to an informational session at the Genesis Center for Weight Management in December 2013.

The Need for Change

It was time. My weight had gone up and down over the years; I'd probably lost the same 20 lbs. ten times over. I knew how to lose weight, but I just didn't know how to keep it off. I'm a successful professional with an MBA, but I felt like a failure. I had control over every other area in my life, so why couldn't I fix my weight problem?

I didn't know what to expect from that session, but I really wanted to know if bariatric surgery was even an option for me. I'd thought about it over the years, but brushed it off as being the "easy way out", or thought I surely wasn't big enough to qualify. I learned that it would NOT be the easy way out, and while my BMI alone wasn't high enough for me to qualify, when combined with a co-morbid condition, I likely would.

I left that evening not really feeling certain about pursuing it further. But, after some serious soul searching, I decided that based

on my family history and the path I was destined to follow, it was worth it. I was worth it.

I'd just finished grad school at the University of Iowa and decided I was at a good place in my life to do it. I talked with my primary care physician and she supported me wholeheartedly. My family wasn't so sure at first, but I simply asked for their love and support. My best friend was there for me all the way, too.

The Best of the Best

I had my first appointment at Genesis in January 2014. I had a few friends who had gone to Genesis for bariatric surgery, and I knew of its reputation of being the "best of the best" in the area. I quickly realized there were a lot of requirements to be met, but there's also a process and a coordinator who would help me navigate these waters. That was a huge relief. I'm a busy professional, and I didn't have time to manage this by myself.

I spent the next several months doing everything I needed to do and preparing for the changes I knew were coming. Through working with the nurses and

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nutritionist at Genesis, I was learning how to make better food choices and getting my



head around what I needed to do differently to be successful. I learned the surgery is a tool. It wouldn't do the work for me, but it could work with me to get to a healthy weight. And that was my goal. Dr. Aanestad was amazing; he spent the time I needed to feel comfortable with my decision and educated about the surgery. I'm thankful for his expertise!

A Reflection to Be Proud of

My surgery was finally approved and scheduled for Oct. 27, 2014. I remember being scared up to the minute I closed my eyes that morning. But, here I am almost a year later - at a normal body weight! I'm back into jogging (something I hadn't done for many years), and it's so much

easier (and fun) to be active. I'm proud of my progress and am finally comfortable telling people outside of my inner circle about my big decision. Everyone obviously sees the big changes - who wouldn't notice this much weight loss?!

I'm excited to share my journey, and it's my hope to inspire and encourage you. My message to you is simple - don't let your fear of failure or the unknown keep you from taking control of your health and your life. It's not easy, but it's worth it. YOU are worth it!

- By Tina, professional, wife, mom, and bariatric patient

Want to Know More?

Considering bariatric surgery can be overwhelming. If you have questions, ask us. Let us be there for you from beginning to end.

Visit us at www.genesishealth.com/YesToWeightLoss for information including:

- Surgical and Non-surgical weight loss options
- Free Educational Classes
- Support Groups
- Patient Stories and Blogs



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