

The Journey Beyond Fat— by Jennifer Allen

In January 2004, I made a life changing decision. I chose to have gastric bypass surgery at Hurley Center for Comprehensive Weight Loss with Dr. Obeid. My decision to do this had a lot of different reactions, but I knew this decision was the right one for me.

My journey actually began about 10 months before when I was laying in the emergency room being told I might be having a stroke, or some other kind of heart problem. It turned out my blood pressure was through the roof and my sugar had topped out at 270. Being 29 with a husband and 2 girls at home under the age of 10, dying because of obesity related problems was not an option. I went to talk to my primary care physician about another diet and getting on medications when she said she had another option to talk to me about, Gastric By-Pass. I thought, "no way I am not that big." She gave me the number for Hurley and I called. A couple days later I received the information in the mail and called to see what it was about. I liked what I heard about it—basically curing diabetes and blood pressure problems. I called and scheduled my first consultation. My insurance required me to have a majority of the tests done for clearance before my consult so I couldn't get in until October. That day came like Christmas for me. As I walked into the clinic and looked around the room, I saw people who looked much heavier than me and thought "OH NO what if I don't qualify." I knew I was fat but always

pretended I was never that BIG! I was scared and my husband Andy was too. He just held my hand and we didn't say much. Then my name was called and back to the room I was going. All I kept thinking is "please don't laugh me out of here." First stop was the scale and I weighed in at 260 pounds. When I met Dr. Obeid, I knew he was the doctor for me. He was very approachable and honest. He knew from taking one look at me that I needed the surgery, and when he saw all the co-morbidities, there wasn't a doubt. I already had all my clearances, so I just needed final insurance approval. In our counseling session that day, I heard words that are truer to me now than they were then. Our counselor said when she started her journey, she asked her husband if he would take her hand and fly with her through this journey and to be by her side through it all, because support is so important. He said yes. Andy and I walked out of there that day with complete calm and readiness to begin our own journey. Yes the surgery itself and the loss was mine, but the journey was and is ours together. I asked Andy if he would take my hand and fly with me and he has.

Waiting for insurance approval was a long wait. In the time I spent waiting, I found a wonderful site devoted to Weight Loss Surgery patients. It's called obesityhelp.com. On this site I found answers to a lot of questions related to aftercare, support and anything I wanted to know. I also found a message board for Michigan. I went on and little did I know it was the beginning of lifelong friendships with people who I am blessed to have as a part of my life. We laugh and say if it

wasn't for the board we never would have approached one another, even if we were the last few people left in a room. Fat people are unapproachable, at least that is the rumor anyway. The people I have met are the support I go to every day and many of them are now my closest friends here. Three of them are also Hurley patients that have had surgery with Dr. Obeid. I instantly hooked up with one of them and we were the same age, had the same insurance, and she already had the surgery.

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**Jennifer Before Weight
Loss Surgery**

The Journey Beyond Fat continued.....

She became my support buddy. I thank God for her everyday. Another former patient has also helped me out tremendously with her knowledge and friendship. They have both told me what to expect from the time I woke up until now.

On December 3, 2003, I got my final approval letter and surgery was scheduled for January 28, 2004. I met with Dr. Obeid one more time and we set a goal weight of 130 pounds. I walked out thinking 130 pounds, No way. That meant I needed to lose 130 pounds. On Christmas Eve, I told the rest of my family I had a gift for them my health and my life. I got different reactions some good, and some bad. I didn't care. I knew what I was doing. Finally January 27, came and I kissed my girls goodbye. Presley, at 7, didn't know too much about it, She just knew I was going into to have surgery to lose weight. My 5 year old Madi, just knew I was going away and wasn't too happy. I cried myself to sleep that night, afraid of the unknown and afraid of the nay sayers being right. I knew I had my husband in my corner along with my dad and mom, and at least one of my brothers. I wanted to prove to the other one that I would make it. He was and is now supportive, but was very scared. The next morning on the way into the OR, I was thinking to myself, well this is it, kid. I will see you on the other side.

Well the journey began with a bang. I was down 35 pounds in 4 weeks. Summer came and I was walking and riding my bike, rollerblading and running around with my kids. My sugar was normal and so was my blood pressure. No more migraines, no more finger pokes. Just awesome days ahead. Eating the right way was hard at first. I always wanted to eat fast and I had to learn that eating quick was not fun. I didn't like the protein drinks but

they are a way of life now. I drink the Isopure from GNC and I like it best frozen. In April, I got the chance to become a surgery buddy to 2 wonderful people who are also patients of Dr. Obeid. I took their hands and walked with them through every step of their process. They have become a major part of our lives, are doing great and are such an inspiration.

About 9 months after surgery I developed a bad gallbladder and huge hernia. I went into see Dr. Obeid. He and I agreed that it had to be fixed and I should have my tummy tuck at the same time. I wanted to wait until I was closer to my anniversary date. I made it close, and on January 20, 2005, I was back in the OR at Hurley having triple surgeries. Dr. Obeid was in charge of the gallbladder and hernia, and Dr. Algahnem was in charge of the tummy tuck. All went well. The next week I celebrated my 1 year anniversary. I have lost 117 pounds and went from wearing a size 24/26 to wearing a size 8 with the swelling! I can do anything I want run, rollerblade, wear a sexy bathing suit and most of all my husband can pick me up! My brothers are astonished at the results as is everyone else. The best part is to see happiness and honesty in people's eyes now, not embarrassment or pity for the fat girl. I look at pictures of myself now and can't believe that was me. I didn't ever look at them before. I guess that is why I never thought I was "that BIG". I look at pictures of me now and cry because I am healthy, happy, and beautiful thanks to Dr. Obeid and Hurley CCWL. Dr. Obeid is truly a blessing in my life and I thank god for him everyday. My life is only going to get better and having all of these wonderful people on my side, there is no way I am going to fail...

God Bless,
Jeni Allen



**Jennifer After Weight Loss
Surgery and she looks.....**



Fantastie



Chicken Cacciatore over Pasta

www.splenda.com



Preparation Time: 30 Minutes

Makes: 6 servings

Ingredients:

16 ounces skinned and boned uncooked chicken breast, cut into 32 pieces

1/2 cup chopped onion

1/2 cup chopped green bell pepper

2 cups (one 16-ounce can) tomatoes, chopped and undrained

1 cup (one 8-ounce can) tomato sauce

2 Tbsp SLENDA® Granular

1 1/2 tsp Italian seasoning

1/3 cup sliced ripe olives

1/8 tsp black pepper

3 cups hot cooked noodles or any favorite pasta, rinsed and drained

Directions:

1. In large skillet sprayed with olive-oil flavored cooking spray, sauté chicken, onion and green pepper for 6 to 8 minutes. Stir in undrained tomatoes and tomato sauce.
2. Add SLENDA® Granular, Italian seasoning, olives and black pepper. Mix well to combine. Lower heat and simmer for 10-15 minutes, stirring occasionally.

For each serving, place 1/2 cup pasta on one plate and spoon 2/3 cup sauce over the top.



Nutrition Information:

Total Calories	170
Calories from Fat	30
Total Fat	3.5 g
Saturated Fat	4 g
Cholesterol	45 mg
Sodium	250 mg
Total Carbohydrate	14 g
Dietary Fiber	2 g
Sugars	4 g
Protein	19 g

Peanut Butter Cup Protein Shake

www.about.com

Ingredients:

2 scoops chocolate protein powder (or vanilla protein powder and 1 tbsp cocoa powder)

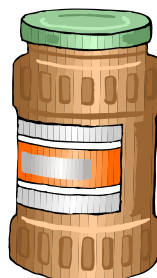
1 tbsp natural peanut butter (smooth or chunky)

8 oz. water (or low-fat milk)

3-5 ice cubes

Directions:

Add all ingredients to blender, whip, and serve.



Nutritional Information:

Calories	95
Carbohydrates	3 g
Protein	4 g
Fat	8 g
Fiber	1 g

Note From George: She Didn't "Need" Follow-up

My answering service paged me that a Ms. B. was on the line. She was in pain and needed to speak with me right away. I recalled that we had performed a gastric bypass on her about two years ago, but after we removed her sutures, she did not return for follow-up. I asked the operator to please put her through to me.

I knew the phone was connected when I heard someone moan and, then after a pause, say, "Doctor, Doctor, I have this terrible pain. I can't keep anything down and I feel awful. What do you think I should do?" I asked her how long she had had the pain and she said "I have been having this pain on and off for three weeks now. It's horrible. I went to the Emergency Room twice and, the first time, they admitted me to the hospital and didn't find anything wrong. They did a lot of blood studies on me and even a CT scan and they were all OK. I just don't know what to do."

"Did any of those doctors call me?" I asked. "No, they didn't," she replied. "Did you or a friend or family member possibly try to reach me and didn't get one of us?" "No," she said, "But this pain is really bad and I need something right now. You've got to do something for me, please, right now."

I then asked her how she had been doing since her surgery. She replied, "Just great, no problems, nothing at all. I lost all my weight and, until this started, I felt terrific. That's why I didn't need to see you at all. I was doing so well. What do you think is

wrong with me now?"

I told her, "I have some ideas but I don't know exactly what's going on. It is very difficult to tell over the telephone. You need to be seen first. Maybe you should go to the ER and ask the doctors there to call us so we can discuss your case together. Make sure you have them call now."

"Yes. Thank you so much. I'll do that," she finished.

Well, how do you think I felt? As she well knew, and I expect, most all our patients know that we feel a strong sense of caring. I very much wanted to help her. But what else? I felt sorry for her and her problem and wanted to help get her well. Anything else? No. Nothing else. No, nothing else.

But, wrong question. You see, I wasn't feeling anything negative towards her but that doesn't mean I had shut down my brain and wasn't thinking. I couldn't help recalling how this lady had let herself down by not coming back for follow-up these past two years. I also couldn't help wondering what made Ms. B. not ask her physicians or friends or relatives to call us while she was having this pain on and off during the last two weeks. Did I blame her? No. Was I upset? Still the answer is "No." It's a free country, Thank God, She is an adult and has every right to make her own choices, even if they are not in her best interest.

We don't allow ourselves to get upset by these and similar scenarios. It serves no good. We don't blame

the patient because she is suffering, probably more and longer than if she had called us two weeks or so earlier. It was her choice. Unfortunately, she had already paid the "pain price" for consequences of her own actions as she was free to do. I just wanted to help her and was at least glad that she had finally called us even if it took this turn of events for her to seek help. However, I made a mental note to later discuss her non-compliant history with her and ask what her future behavior might be. We did and she told me she would "do better next time." And, so far she has.

We skipped a little "Fast Forward" there didn't we? Expect you want to know what happened after Ms. B. called me. She was seen in the ER, the physician on duty there paged me and we admitted her to hospital. After some tests, we found the problem, fixed it and she is now fine. But, if we had seen her when her problems started, most likely we could have taken care of them through a couple or so office visits.

The moral of this story is.... No, c'mon, I'm not going to insult you. I expect you can figure that one out for yourself. Do you think we should give a brochure on "Follow-up After Surgery and Call Us Before Things Get Really Bad"??? I must admit we were tempted after this phone call.

All the best, George

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CCWL Recipe Contest

Its not too late for the

Do you have a bariatric friendly recipe you would like to share and win \$?

The CCWL contest will be accepting recipes in these 4 categories:

- **Protein Shake or Beverage**
- **Side Dish**
- **Main Dish**
- **Dessert**



The CCWL staff will pick a winner in each category. If your recipe is published in the **May or June Newsletter** you will win a

\$25 Gift Certificate

to either Target or Wal-Mart!

Send entries to:

Brandie Hagaman
CCWL Recipe Contest
3891 Ranchero Drive, Suite 10
Ann Arbor, MI 48108

Or email:

bahagaman@shsm.net

Don't forget to include your name and address in case you win!

Extended Deadline is: April 22, 2005

By submitting a recipe you grant your permission for it to be reproduced in any Center for Comprehensive Weight Loss publication.

Weight Status of Children Ages 8 to 15 Predicts Obesity and High Blood Pressure in Adulthood-Children's Hospital Boston

A study shows that even children with a body mass index on the high end of normal are at risk, particularly boys. New research shows that children between 8 and 15 years old who are in the upper half of the normal weight range are more likely than their leaner peers to become obese or overweight as young adults. This research was conducted over nearly a decade at the Harvard Medical School (HMS) and Harvard Pilgrim Health Care Department of Ambulatory Care and Prevention and Children's Hospital Boston.

“We have known that kids who are overweight or obese have a higher risk for being overweight or obese as adults. But in this paper, we show that even children in the high normal weight range have an elevated risk of becoming overweight or obese as

adults,” said lead author Alison Field, assistant professor at HMS and Children's Hospital Boston.

According to the Centers for Disease Control and prevention's national reference data, children with a BMI between the national 85th and 95th percentiles for age and gender are classified as at risk for being overweight, and those with a BMI greater than the 95th percentile are classified as overweight. The authors considered a body mass index between the 50th and 84th percentile to be in the high normal range.

The results also showed that among the boys, elevated BMI in childhood predicted risk of high blood pressure (hypertension) in young adulthood. This was compared with boys who had a childhood BMI below the 75th

percentile.

“There has been widespread recognition in the past few years of how important it is to prevent obesity in children. These findings underscore that even children who are in the high normal weight range may have adverse outcomes later in life, and our challenge may be even greater than we thought,” said Matthew Gillman, senior author on the paper and associate professor of ambulatory care and prevention at HMS. “We must focus not only on the most obese kids but also on those who are just a bit overweight.”

