

Augusta Weight Loss Support Group

The Journey

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"To get something you've never had, you have to do something you've never done."Unknown

The Big Move

By Michael W. Blaney, M.D.

Trinity Bariatric and Weight Loss Center has moved! We are no longer at our Johns Road office. Our new updated office is located at 2260 Wrightsboro Road, Suite 150 in the Summerville Professional building, where the old pharmacy used to be. The Summerville building is conveniently located next to the hospital. Our new offices are on the 1st floor, just inside the back entrance. While our phone numbers, e-mails and smiles are all the same, we now have more comfortable exam rooms, a larger classroom and a cleaner fresher look.

Our clothing closet will also be moving. The closet is not open yet, but we are hoping to have it up and running again in the next few weeks. The clothing closet will be located in Trinity Hospital on the ground floor just outside of the conference room where the support group meetings and informational seminars are held. The new space is a little larger and very convenient to the group meetings. We will continue to have both men's and women's business/church appropriate attire available in various sizes to help support our patients through the transitional periods. For convenience, the closet will be open before and after the 1st and 3rd Thursday support group meetings each month.

Carla has moved too! All of the samples, literature and other miscellaneous goodies that she puts in patient sample bags are now housed at the Midtown Surgical Offices on Central Avenue. Sample bags will now be made available to new post-op patients at the first follow-up appointment. Although she doesn't keep office hours, you will continue to run into Carla at both office locations, the hospital and support group meetings. Carla will continue to be available by phone and always eager to help.

We hope you enjoy our new location and some of the incredible changes that we are making. As always, we look forward to serving you and supporting you on your journey to better health.

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To Tell or Not To Tell

By Connie Stapleton, Ph.D.

A number of years ago, I was watching my seven-year-old nephew standing alone in the lake, minding his own business. Apparently thinking out loud, he *shouted*, "To be or not to be... THAT is a question". Not *the* question, as Mr. Shakespeare had written it, but *a* question nonetheless. "To Tell or Not to Tell" (about your surgery) is also a question.

There are a number of questions associated with whether or not to tell people about your bariatric surgery. Who do you tell? When do you tell them? Who needs to know? Who has a right to know? Who do you want to tell? Who do you not want to tell?

The obvious list of potential people to know about your surgery include your spouse/partner, children, parents, siblings, friends, bosses, and coworkers. *It is not mandatory that you tell all of the people on this list.* You need to take some very important things into consideration before you tell people about your decision to have bariatric surgery.

Do some people need to know? *Someone* probably does need to know simply for health reasons. If you have complications or have some sort of medical emergency related or unrelated to your surgery, someone close to you

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My Journey to Divorce

By Kim Dixon Monroe

Just like most married couples, I never dreamed that my marriage to food would end in divorce after 30 years of marital bliss.

I began my relationship with food when I was a teenager. I was never attracted to the sweets that life has to offer, you know the ones - chocolate, cookies, cakes, and donuts. I always preferred the salty and savory pleasures – pasta, potatoes, bread, rice, and chips. Well, ours was the perfect union. I ate when I was happy, I ate when I was sad, I ate when I was mad, and I even ate when I wasn't even hungry.

I can still remember our wedding vows: I promise to love, honor and cherish you in sickness and health, for richer or poorer, until death us do part. Oh to be young and in love.

When you are young and in love with food, let's face it, you are clueless. You don't think about the future, you live for that very moment. You don't think about the years ahead when you are faced with diabetes, high blood pressure, immobility, heart problems, and varicose veins. It never crosses your mind that when you go to a restaurant you will have to ask for a table because you can't fit into a booth.

And just what are you doing while you are living in that moment? You are standing in line at the grocery store with a cart filled with all of those wonderful salty and savory pleasures. I love those commercials, "You can't eat just one". Do they mean that you can't eat just one chip or one whole bag? I think they should be more specific, don't you?

And so as the years passed swiftly by, my beloved food and I settled into our comfortable life together. All the while, those numbers on that dreadful scale continued to climb. Unfortunately, the numbers were trekking in the wrong direction. Oh, don't get me wrong, there were quite a few detours along the way. I made several trips to Weight Watchers Island where I spent my days adding up points for everything that I ate. Needless to say, math was never my strong point. So, I don't guess I have to tell you how quickly I got voted off the island. I took a cruise once on the Nutrisystem, only to get motion sickness from those dreadful boxed meals. And who could forget good 'ole Atkins. I never could quite comprehend how eating fatty foods was going to help me lose fat.

Finally, after all of those years of silent abuse, our marriage had reached an impasse. The time had come to break my vows and to no longer love, honor, and cherish those delectable salty and savory pleasures. I started to realize that all of those amazing foods were making me sick and I needed to file for divorce in order to save myself.

I did a lot of research and found the perfect person to handle my divorce. During my first meeting with Dr. Michael Blaney, it didn't take me long to realize that he understood where I was, how I got there, and where I wanted to be. His retainer was worth every penny because he was helping to save my life.

My court appearance was held on December 9th. I am well aware that gastric bypass surgery is not a quick fix. I am also aware that I have some rough terrain ahead of me. I won't be needing an atlas or a fancy GPS to show me the way. I have the greatest navigator of all, and He has promised to never leave me and to carry me when I feel like I can't go on. So, yes, Your Honor, I am ready for this divorce and there is no chance of a reconciliation. I am excited to embark on this journey – a journey of hope, faith, and joy.

LEAP into Success!!

By Carla Harrison

Have you heard about our new program to help you get back on track? We call it LEAP and it stands for "Learning Everything Again Pays". LEAP is an exciting new program that we developed to help you understand why you might be reclaiming some of your lost weight and what to do about it. If you are a fairly new post-op patient that didn't fully realize the impact bariatric surgery would have



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will have to pass that information on to medical professionals involved in your care. Obviously, the fact that you had bariatric surgery will be in your medical records, but having someone close to you aware of your medical situation is a good idea.

Who will genuinely support you? One thing is certain. It is essential to have the emotional support of people you trust following the surgery. Ironically, this is not always the people you would assume... sometimes family members and even spouses sabotage your success following surgery. It is rare that bariatric patients do not inform their spouse or significant other about having bariatric surgery for obvious reasons. You likely spend a lot of time with this person and will need their assistance immediately following surgery. You will need their physical *and* emotional support as time goes by. There will be times when you are sad or angry or upset as you grieve not being able to eat like you want to. You will be tempted to eat foods that are disagreeable to post-bariatric patients. Your partner will help you through these times by encouraging you to eat the right things, by distracting you when you have “head hunger”, by cheering you on through the rough spots and by celebrating with you in your many successes. For these reasons and more, the person most actively involved in your life on a day to day basis is going to be someone you need to tell about surgery.

On the other hand, just because people are actively involved in your life does not mean they necessarily need to know about your surgery. You need to decide how supportive each person you consider telling will be. Sadly, sometimes you may need to refrain from telling people very close to you. For example, if a sibling, other relative or friend engages in some sort of rivalry with you, whether spoken or unspoken, it may be wise not to tell them, especially if they are the type who “always needs to win”. These people, if they know about your surgery, may verbally praise you and swear to support you. However, whether consciously or not, they will likely sabotage you by asking you to dinner at your old favorite buffet restaurant. They may bring you fattening desserts or eat luscious but dangerous foods in front of you. You may find them talking about food more often than they used to when in your presence. If you or your most trusted person in life thinks someone would treat you in this manner, it is probably best not to tell them...even if it’s your mother or twin sister.

Do your children need to know? It depends...on their age, their level of understanding about obesity and about the surgery. If you choose to tell your children, let them be part of the entire process. Educate them about obesity, its causes and consequences. Have them attend the information sessions about the surgery and about post-surgical living. Let them meet your surgeon and ask questions. Your children may be frightened about your having surgery. They may have heard “horror stories” on the television about bariatric surgery. It is essential for them to have factual information without being scared. If you choose to tell your children, make the recovery from obesity a family affair. Cook healthy meals with your children. Become active with them by walking, riding bicycles, going to the gym, and playing ball. You will be helping them develop healthy behaviors for their lives and for their present or future family.

What about telling your boss and co-workers? Again, it depends. How long will you be away from work? If you have a procedure that requires you to be away from your job for many weeks, you may have to inform someone as to the reason for your absence. You may choose not to tell them the exact reasons for being away, but if you trust the person, and believe they will be a support for you following surgery, then it may be wise to tell them. If you work in an environment where gossip at the water cooler is the reason people go to work in the first place, be extremely selective about who you tell. Be prepared, though. The minute you tell one or two people, it won’t be long before everyone in your office – and probably the two or three offices down the hall – knows “the big news”. If you choose not to tell coworkers and they start asking questions as you lose weight, simply share with them that you have changed your eating and exercise behaviors. *That is the truth!* And remember, it is quite possible to return to work, go out to lunch with your co-workers, and survive the donut-filled break room without anyone on the job site knowing that you had bariatric surgery.

The bottom line is that you only want to tell people who will support you throughout the process leading up to the surgery and following the surgery. An important issue surrounding whether you choose “To Tell or Not to Tell” is that of boundaries. It is never a good idea to tell someone your whole life story – to include the issue of bariatric surgery – until you know them and can trust them. I always suggest to people that if someone tells you their entire life story within the first ten minutes of meeting you... run like crazy – in the opposite direction! Having healthy emotional boundaries means you disclose personal information sparingly to persons who have earned your trust. (Being a family member does not automatically guarantee trustworthiness.)

Your decision to have bariatric was a personal one. Your decision to share the information is equally personal. Be smart. Choose to tell those persons you can count on to genuinely support you in the rough times and to celebrate with you your many successes!

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on your life, this program is what you need!

Come join us on July 17th as we spend the day getting back to the basics. We start the day with an early morning walk with the bariatric team. After we get our blood pumping and assure that we are all wide awake, we'll get down to business with a healthy breakfast and learn about food journaling. Throughout the day we will have presentations from and discussions with Dr. Chasen, Dr. Stapleton, Bryn Hamilton and Michele Wallace. This is definitely a "hands on" seminar! All written materials are presented to you in a three ring binder that is yours to keep. In addition to breakfast, you will also be provided lunch and two snacks.

The fee for this one day seminar is \$50 and is open to everyone. Proceeds from the LEAP program will benefit the Augusta Weight Loss Coalition (AWLC), a member of the Legacy Foundation. Call the bariatric center for reservations and more information.

What's Happening?

By Carla Harrison

Free Informational Seminars – 1st & 3rd Thursday of every month at Trinity Hospital of Augusta. Meet in the ground floor conference room at 5:30 pm. Seminars are open to the public. People seeking information on bariatric surgery are encouraged to stay for the Weight Loss Surgery Support Group Meeting immediately following the informational seminar.

Support Group Meetings – 1st & 3rd Thursday of every month at Trinity Hospital of Augusta at 7pm. Meetings are held in the ground floor conference room. Everyone is welcome!

Support Group Leader contact information:
Carla Harrison
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Augusta WLS Support Groups

Trinity Bariatric and Weight Loss Center

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Augusta, GA 30904

Phone: (706) 481-7298

**Message Board:**

<http://health.groups.yahoo.com/group/augustawls/>

Web address:

http://www.augustasurgery.com/weight_loss_surgery.html

<http://www.trinitybariatrics.com>

Mark Your Calendars!!

- June 17th, 2010** – Informational Seminar, 5:30
 *Dr. Arthur Chasen
 Support Group Meeting
 *Understanding Your Labs –
 Dr. Chasen
- July 1, 2010** - Informational Seminar, 5:30pm
 *Dr. Michael Blaney
 Support Group Meeting, 7pm
 *Plastic Surgery –
 Connie Stapleton, Ph.D
- July 15, 2010** - Informational Seminar, 5:30pm
 *Dr. Arthur Chasen
 Support Group Meeting, 7pm
 * Journaling - Dr. Chasen
- July 17, 2010** - LEAP - Make your reservation today for our revolutionary *Back On Track* program seminar (\$50 fee).

Save The Date!!!

We are already planning for the Bariatric Ball 2011! Mark your calendars for February 12th and plan to attend our Sweetheart Ball! Look for more information and opportunities to support this event in future newsletters and on the Yahoo Message Board! With your support, this year's ball will be better than our first one!

October 9th, 2010 marks the day of Augusta's very first Walk From Obesity! Join in and spread awareness in the community. Make it a family event! Post a message on the board to Rosemary Harris, Susie Salenger-Smith, Kiah Washington or Dr. Connie Stapleton for more information. Lets join together and make this happen for Augusta!