

Augusta Weight Loss Support Groups

The Journey

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

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10 Thanksgiving Calorie Cutting Tips

By *Connie Stapleton, Ph.D.*

One of the most frightening days of the year for many WLS patients, Thanksgiving 2010, is upon us! Taking the fear out of consuming too many extra calories can lead to a day filled with love, gratitude and hope. Being prepared can help you feel more in control and allow you to get through Thanksgiving, and the entire holiday season, knowing you can enjoy the food and the company and still keep your weight stable. Take advantage of these calorie-cutting tips for your holiday feast:

1. Prepare yourself mentally to eat the lean, healthy foods first and to give yourself permission to taste (as in one teaspoon-full tastes) of the more caloric dishes served at holiday get-togethers. This way you will fill up on the healthy foods you have come to appreciate for how they have turned your body into a healthier place for you to live and will prevent you from feeling deprived.

2. The best news about Thanksgiving dinner for WLS patients is that the main dish is one of the best things for you – as long as you chew it thoroughly! Naturally, sticking to the lean white meat minimizes the number of calories you consume. If you insist on having gravy, put it on the side like you would salad dressing and dip your fork into it so you have just a bit of the flavor rather than floating your turkey in what is really liquid fat, something you definitely want to avoid.

3. Another benefit of Thanksgiving eating is that most people do put out healthy snacks

throughout the day. Choose the fresh veggies and use low-fat yogurt if you want to dip them in something tasty. A few almonds or cashews are also a healthy choice. If you are going away from home, take these foods with you to ensure you have healthy options available.

4. Drink water as you visit with friends and family (except for the “no-water” time frames before and after your meal). This way you will always have something in your hand and can sip instead of bite.

5. Avoid alcohol as it contains a lot of empty calories. There are so many other ways to enjoy maybe a few extra calories on Thanksgiving (i.e., a sliver of pie) and alcohol often results in dumping, never a fun experience.

6. Use the “white space” technique, which means be sure you see plenty of (empty) white space on your plate, which means there are fewer calories than on an overflowing plate!

7. Use the WLS eating techniques to consume fewer calories. Put your eating utensils down between bites. Wait a few minutes between bites and enjoy conversation.

8. If you're the cook, use low-fat recipes. Make some new “traditional” dishes, which contain fewer calories. Your family probably won't know the difference. If you are eating at someone else's home, volunteer to bring a few dishes, which you can prepare using the lower-fat ingredients.

9. Serve several vegetable choices this year. This will allow you to have a greater selection of food on your plate and still eat healthy.

10. Use sugar substitutes when making even the desserts. Still consume only small – very small – portions of dessert, but the lower the calorie, the better you will feel, both physically and emotionally.

Write down all you have to be grateful for this year and share it with your loved ones. It's a great tradition. And after your holiday meal, get the gang up and go out for a walk – even if you live where it's snowing! Happy Thanksgiving to you!

The Best WOW Moment Ever!

By: Lorrie Griffin, RNY 9-14-09

I must share the best WOW moment I have ever experienced.



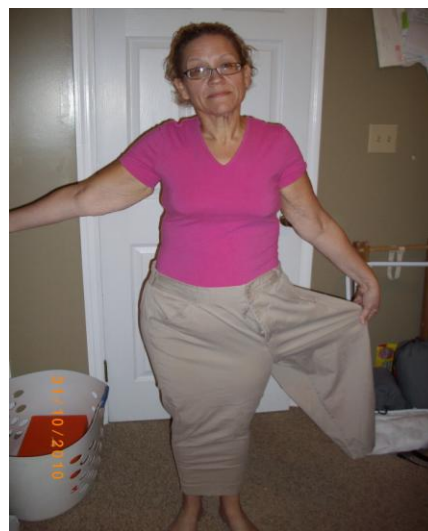
My mother has asked me several times if I have saved any of my old clothes – told her yes – my favorite blue jeans, a pair of Capri's and a pair of black dress pants. Last night as I was trying to decide what I was going to wear for work today – I thought I should try on my old fat clothes – when I tell you all I could do was cry – I did. I lived in those jeans when I wasn't at work – I remember them being so tight I had to hold in my stomach to get them zipped – I had put on my fat clothes before but not in quite a while. I am a visual person – I make the connection when I SEE things – (which is quite interesting after growing up with a totally blind mother- I am sure there is some kind of connection) anyway – so I put the jeans on – all I kept hear in pants on the ground song from the singing sound – I ran down the hall for my blind mother to feel what I had lost – people keep telling me that can't believe I have weighed 253 lbs before – I am the one that stills sees her fat self in the mirror – but the new me in the reflection of a window – go figure – so when I put those pants on and realized how much I have truly changed all I could do was cry – Frank realized at that moment that I had seen the new me!! so I pulled – no not pulled anymore but put the other pants on – I said I have seen others put 2 legs in one – could I do that – well HECK YEA – I was going to try – to my total disbelief – put one leg in then the other and yes – I GOPT BOTH LEGS IN ONE – the jeans were straight leg so I couldn't get both feet out the hole but got it down the leg. I am speechless – tearless – and in complete shock – at this point my mom comes down the hall to see what all the commotion was about – in one brief moment I allowed the old me in because I suddenly became so disgusted with myself for letting myself get in that position – but that is the past – I will remember it BUT never REVISIT it again. I have make a vowel and a promise to myself – Frank and my family – I am different – numbers will never define me again – I live for today and the future the past is just that the past –

As I prepare for my surgery on Monday – I have questioned who will I be with my twin stomachs removed – I will be the same person on the inside but how will the surgery change me – I hope not but there is always a slight chance – I will focus on the healthy and happy side of life. I thank this group and everyone in it for always listening – good, bad or even ugly – you mean more to me then you will ever know – oh I will be putting the pants back on this weekend to take some pictures – I will get them posted.

I know I am going to be ok on the second part of this journey.



Before picture taken 7/08/09; Pants size 22



After picture taken 10/31/10

106 Pounds Gone!!

The Pain of Regain

By: Susie Salenger-Smith, Lap Band, Sept 2006

It is not my intention in writing this to scare anyone nor is to be a downer, but it is a reality that a lot of us have to face.

When I first decided to have surgery, after much research and soul searching, I was scared to death, but I was content with my decision. Right after the surgery, I was not sure I had done the right thing, but soon after that, when the weight started falling off and my self-esteem rose to record levels, I realized that it was the absolute right thing to do. It gave me my life back, as many of us know, or even gave me a life I didn't know I was capable of living. That was the honeymoon period and it was fantastic and euphoric, a feeling I wouldn't trade for the world.

But then two years or so later, when life settled down and started to return to "normal," things started to change a bit. Suddenly, these feelings that had plagued me my entire life and seemed to have disappeared the past two years started creeping back in. I'm talking about those food addiction feelings, the insane desire to eat anything and everything I could get my hands on, the emotional eating for any reason whatsoever, that inner voice calling to me even though I'm not really hungry and telling me that I am. All I could think was, oh, my gosh, they're back. I thought they would be gone forever.

I know everyone said that the surgery was just a tool, but I'm not sure I really understood that for those first years. Well, now I do. It is a tool that I have inside my body to help me with my weight loss and to help me maintain my weight, but I am the master of my domain, I am the one that has to use it and control it, a concept that was foreign to me since food always controlled me before.

As the weight started coming back on and I stopped exercising and I was obviously eating more and eating more of what I shouldn't be eating and I stopped going to support group meetings, I realized that I must do something, but what? Well, the answer was actually very logical. Get back into it, you fool. You know what to do and you know how to do it, but it is very difficult to do it alone, and I know that.

So here I am, back to the support group meetings, also seeking psychological help through group therapy to get at the issues that are eating away at me, so to speak. I am also involving my family once again to help me in my struggles, and thank goodness they are very supportive. But that is the key, don't stop doing the things you're supposed to do and seek help wherever you have to get the support you need.

I was nervous coming back to the meetings because most of the faces were new and I did not know them, but I discovered what I think I knew all along, that support is there for everyone and from everyone, not just the ones I started this journey with. And if there is any message I can send to any of the newbies out there or the people that are approaching that two-year mark, do not stop coming to the meetings, do not stop asking for support -- you will always need it -- and do not stop doing what you're supposed to do. I have discovered what an incredible group we have here and I am now taking advantage of it and trying to immerse myself in it, getting involved again and asking for help. Now the next step is exercising again and there's a whole group of people out there who are going to see to it that I get back into it, and I am very grateful for them.

I am no longer going to feel the pain of regain; I am going to feel euphoria once again!!!



The bariatric center is currently accepting reservations for the next LEAP (**L**earning **E**verything **A**gain **P**ays) seminar scheduled for **January, 2011**. Please call the center at 706-481-7398 for additional information. **All proceeds from LEAP are donated to the Augusta Bariatric Coalition, a project of the National Legacy Foundation**



Holiday Potluck

By: *Carla Harrison, Bariatric Support Coordinator*

Bring your favorite WLS friendly dish and join us for our Holiday Pot Luck, Recipe and Gift Exchange! Along with a dish for each adult, bring 50 copies of the recipe you've prepared, If you need a place to make copies, put a single recipe twice on one side of paper. Call the bariatric center and make an appointment with Robin or Christina to make you 25 copies. You cut the pages in half and you'll have your 50 recipes!

If you want to join in on the fun gift exchange, bring a \$10 gift for each adult participating.

What's Happening?

By *Carla Harrison, Bariatric Support Coordinator*

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!

New group formed in Dublin!!

Bariatric Support Coordinator contact information:
 Carla Harrison
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 Email: cdharr@hotmail.com

**Augusta WLS
 Support Groups**

Midtown Surgical Specialists

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 Augusta, GA 30904
 Phone: (706) 738-3359

Message Board:

<http://www.augustawls.com>

Web address:

<http://www.augustasurgery.com>

<http://www.trinitybariatrics.com>

E-mail: info@augustasurgery.com



Evelyn Bobo has taken on the challenge of hosting the gift exchange game so I know it will be fun for all!

Doctors Blaney and Chasen will be supplying coffee, tea, plates, napkins and plastic ware. We are all responsible for the healthy goodness that we eat!

Join us at 6pm on December 9th, 2010 in the Sister Mary Louise Conference Room on the ground floor of Trinity Hospital at 2260 Wrightsboro Road, Augusta.

See you there!

What do we live for, if it is not to
 make life less difficult for each
 other?

~Edward G. Bulwer-



Mark Your Calendars!!



- DEC 2nd, 2010-** Informational Seminar, 5:30pm
 *Dr. Michael Blaney
 Support Group Meeting, 7pm
- DEC 9th, 2010 –** Holiday Potluck
 Trinity Hospital, 6pm
- DEC 16th, 2010 -** Informational Seminar, 5:30pm
 *Dr. Arthur Chasen
 Support Group Meeting, 7pm
- DEC 20th, 2010 -** Dublin Support Group Meeting
 7 – 8:30pm
 EMS/Rural Fire Building
 646 County Farm Rd.
 Dublin, GA 31021
 Info: paige_crump@yahoo.com
- JAN 6th, 2011 –** Informational Seminar, 5:30pm
 *Dr. Michael Blaney
 Support Group Meeting, 7pm
- JAN 15th, 2011 -** LEAP

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!

