Healthier You

A publication for those interested in Vista Health System's Weight Loss Surgery Program • **Volume 5, Issue 1 • Winter 2009**

Coordinator's Message: Our Patient Population

by June Zaragoza, MPH, RD, LD

Vista's Weight Loss Surgery Program has been successfully operating for four years and by the end of 2008 we had a total of 193 patients. The following table describes our patient population. You can see that we have a wide age range, though most people are closest to 40 years of age. Also now we have more patients using the adjustable gastric band rather than the gastric bypass.

Patient Demographics	N = 193
Average Age	39
Age Range	18-65
White	56%
Hispanic	23%
Black	20%
Asian	1%
Female	88%
Male	12%
Band	55%
Bypass	44%
Sleeve	1%

Another factor to look at in our patients is how much weight they have lost with the surgery. One way to measure this is by calculating Percent Excess Weight Loss (%EWL). Examples:

$$\text{\%EWL (Excess Weight Loss)} = \frac{\text{Original Weight} - \text{Current Weight}}{\text{Weight} - \text{IBW (Ideal Body Weight)}}$$

Example: 5'5" Female $\frac{250-150}{250-125} = \frac{100}{125} = 80\%$

To calculate IBW for women take 100 lbs. for 5', then add 5 lbs for every additional inch.

Example: 5'10" Male $\frac{300-200}{300-166} = \frac{100}{134} = 75\%$

To calculate IBW for men take 106 lbs for 5', then add 6 lbs for every additional inch.

Other studies have found band patients to lose 45% of their excess weight at 1 year, 50% at 2 years and 56% at 3 years. Bypass studies determined that people lose an average of 65% of their excess weight at 2 years. Long-term studies find that bypass patients keep off 49% of their weight even after 14 years.

How do people in our program do? At 1 year bypass patients lost 69% of their excess weight and at 2 years 57%. Band patients lost 34% at 1 year and 38% at 2 years after surgery. However, the range of weight loss with the band is just as high as for the bypass. So, though the average is lower overall, individuals have lost 64% at 1 year and 78% at 2 years. The conclusion is that if you work at it (watch your food and exercise), you will be very successful with either the bypass or the band. Stay in touch with us so we can report your %EWL. Follow-up is critical for success.

On the next page see our Research Updates section for some important articles about weight loss surgery. And last, but not least, read Korine's story about her successful first year as a band patient despite a setback with popcorn.

Free Seminars

Free monthly informational seminars are open to the public and are provided the second Monday of every month at **Vista Medical Center East** (Waukegan). These sessions are presented by independent, board-certified surgeons Dr. Aaron Siegel and Dr. Laurence Gibson (www.lakecountysurgeons.com), who perform weight loss surgery procedures:

- Provide information on both gastric bypass and adjustable gastric band procedures
- Review criteria necessary for surgery to be considered
- Explain necessary lifestyle changes to achieve success

Our next seminars:

- **Monday, March 9, Lindenhurst**
- **Monday, April 13, Waukegan**
- **Monday, May 11, Lindenhurst**

Call **847-360-4246** to register.

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Research Updates

Two important articles were published recently on topics related to weight loss surgery. The first one has to do with cost. Does weight loss surgery save insurance companies and patients money? The second article looks at weight loss surgery and pregnancy, an important topic since so many of our female patients are of child-bearing age. How safe is it to have a baby after surgery?

A study published in *The American Journal of Managed Care* (Vol. 14, No. 9, Sept, 2008) looking at 3651 bariatric patients found that surgery is cost effective. The study calculated that healthcare costs for patients after surgery were $900/month lower than for morbidly obese patients who did not have the surgery. The complete costs of the surgery, including complications, were fully recovered by insurance companies after 25 months. This is truer for more recent surgeries, reflecting improved surgical techniques.

Published in the *Journal of the American Medical Association* (Vol. 300, No. 19, Nov 19, 2008), this review looked at maternal complication rates and neonatal outcomes after surgery in a number of different studies. Maternal complications (gestational diabetes and preeclampsia) were lower in patients who had the surgery compared to obese women who had not. Also improved were the rates of premature delivery, low birth weight, and macrosomia (large babies due to high blood sugar). It was noted that it is important for pregnant gastric bypass patients to take their dietary supplements to avoid anemia for themselves and neural tube defects in their babies. The study also suggested that patients may become more fertile with weight loss, but the evidence is not clear. Usually patients are told to wait 1-2 years before becoming pregnant after the period of rapid weight loss.

Free Support Groups

Support groups are available at Vista Medical Center East in Waukegan and at the Vista Surgery Center in Lindenhurst. These are an integral part of aftercare for individuals who undergo weight loss surgery and also provide a way for those considering surgery to gain information, learn about the required lifestyle changes, and form a support network.

Our next support group meetings:

7 pm, Vista Medical Center East
Same Day Surgery Conf. Rm.
1324 N. Sheridan Rd., Waukegan

- **Wednesday, March 18**
- **Wednesday, April 15**
- **Wednesday, May 20**
- **Wednesday, June 17**

7 pm, Vista Surgery Center
Community Room
1050 Red Oak Ln., Lindenhurst

- **Monday, April 13**
- **Monday, June 8**

Those physically challenged and/or in need of an ASL interpreter may contact us up to one week before a community program to determine how we can facilitate their attendance. Tenemos disponibles los servicios de traducción al Español.

Korine Custer: The Popcorn Lady Feels Like a Million Bucks

by June Zaragoza, MPH, RD, LD

Korine Custer in July 2007 (left) and in October 2008 (right) after losing almost a hundred pounds.

Before surgery Korine found even simple daily tasks incredibly difficult to do. She would get winded doing the laundry. Coming back up the stairs she could only do two at a time. Her face got beet red and her head pounded. She couldn't cross her legs or find any good clothing at sizes 4-5X. She thought, "Why am I doing this to myself?" After a day of grazing she didn't want to do anything. She would drink 3-4 cans of soda, and "always" had candy around the house. Her blood sugar was sky high. "If I had a whim, I ate it. I would get mad at myself, feel depressed all the time. I had no self-esteem at all."

Finally she got inspired by hearing the story of Sharon Osbourne, who lost weight using the Lap-Band®. She looked the surgery up and saw it was less invasive than the bypass. Since she didn't heal well after surgery, she decided to apply for the shorter procedure. She had to do a year of weight loss attempts with her doctor and even then was denied the first time, but she was determined. With additional letters from her doctors, she finally got the approval.

The surgery itself felt like "a wrestling match with Hulk Hogan," and she was sore for a week. But now, almost a hundred pounds less at a year, things are a lot better, including her diabetes. She says "I can walk stairs without feeling winded, can pick up things like crazy. Not much I can't do – fit into restaurant booths, chairs with arms. My church is proud of me. I'm not embarrassed to walk down the street anymore."

She does have some advice for others. "If they tell you don't eat it, don't do it. I never expected that to happen." After eating well chewed popcorn after an adjustment, a little hulk of popcorn swelled her stomach shut. She had to go to the ER and Dr. Siegel took out all her fluid so the hulk could pass. Despite the occasional set backs such as this she states, "I feel like a millions bucks. I just feel great."

See our other success stories on our website www.vistaweightlosssurgery.com. ■