

Message from Dr. Kerlakian

Don't take "no" for an answer—know all of your weight-loss options



It is estimated that 4 percent of the adult population suffers from the disease known as morbid obesity. Yet the number of bariatric procedures performed every year in the United States has remained constant—around 200,000. This is a clear sign

that bariatric surgery options continue to be underutilized.

A recent survey of patients revealed some interesting facts about those with morbid obesity. First, they view the treatment of their disease as very personal—and their own responsibility. As a result, they typically do not reach out to their physicians. When they do bring up the topic, only 13 percent of physicians offer a surgery as an option. Imagine if, as a society, we treated cancer or heart disease in a similar fashion, not providing and weighing all the feasible options.

Second, only 30 percent of the patients surveyed believe that bariatric surgery is safe. Nationwide registries clearly show that the risk of mortality is 1 in 400 patients and the risk of major complications is 2 in 100 patients. What's important to realize is that these odds do not seem so high when compared to the growing risks of remaining at an unhealthy weight.

Patients should feel comfortable researching and asking about all their options. Plus, those of us in the medical community have a responsibility to continuously educate and challenge our colleagues and patients to consider safe surgical options in caring for their disease.

—George M. Kerlakian, MD

Bariatric Support Group Meetings
Good Samaritan Hospital
4th Floor Conference Center B and C
Wednesday, March 15, 5:30–7 p.m.
Wednesday, April 19, 5:30–7 p.m.
Wednesday, May 17, 5:30–7 p.m.

Use sleep to your weight-loss advantage

By Theresa C. Lengerich, PsyD, clinical psychologist at TriHealth Weight Management and Bethesda Sleep Center

Sleep and weight go hand in hand, and that's both bad and good news for your health. While an unhealthy weight can contribute to sleep difficulties such as sleep apnea, lack of sleep can also contribute to unhealthy weight. And it just might be your lifestyle that's getting in the way of your sleep. Many people know that excess weight, especially in the abdomen and neck area, can hinder respiratory function during sleep. This makes you gasp for air, and your brain wakes you up to take a breath. This is called sleep apnea.

What might be less well-known is that research has found that people who do not sleep adequately (between seven and eight hours of uninterrupted sleep for most people) have decreased levels of leptin, an appetite-suppressant hormone. When a body has lower levels of this hormone, it becomes easy to confuse fatigue with hunger. This leads to eating, when what is really needed is sleep. To address this, consider these important factors:

- Any weight-loss plan should include adequate sleep.
- If you have untreated sleep difficulties such as sleep apnea, see a care provider to identify and treat your issue. Otherwise, your weight-loss efforts might be undercut with lack of sleep.
- Be sure to keep exercise in your schedule even when you are fatigued or not sleeping well. Exercise deepens sleep, both of which contribute to weight loss.
- Exercise at least four hours before bedtime, if possible, to avoid being overstimulated at bedtime.
- Give yourself at least 30 minutes before bed to detach from stimulating activity, including surfing the internet, paying bills or watching the latest intense drama on TV.

In our busy lives, it is easy to forget that sleep is as important as being productive. Good sleep happens successfully when we get out of its way, giving ourselves a chance to detach and unwind. When we do this, our minds and bodies get the signal that it is time to let sleep take over. Only then can drifting off be an effortless process.

News you can use

Bariatric support group meetings

Patients are required to attend at least one meeting before surgery but are encouraged to attend as many as possible before and after surgery. Patient feedback indicates that support group meetings are tremendously valuable, both for the information and for the fellowship offered. The meetings provide important information regarding nutrition, behavioral health, exercise and insights from physicians. The latter part of the meeting involves networking and allows members to share their experiences, offer support and ask questions. Family members and/or support persons are also encouraged to attend the meetings. Patients are welcome to attend the monthly meetings as often as they like. See dates and times listed to the left. This support group is for you!

Information seminars

Visit changeforallifetime.com to view an online video seminar or to schedule a free in-person informational appointment with one of our surgeons on Mondays or Wednesdays at 12:30 p.m. Or call 513 862 4957 to schedule.

TriHealth Fitness & Health Pavilion offerings

Taught by Arthritis Foundation instructors at 6200 Pfeiffer Road

\$15 per class or \$40 for four classes

Water classes on Monday, Wednesday and Friday, noon–1 p.m.

Water evening classes on Monday and Thursday, 5:45–6:45 p.m.

Land classes on Tuesday and Thursday, 1:30–2:30 pm

Registration required. Contact Tracy Littellmann at 513 246 2625 or tracy_littellmann@TriHealth.com.

Light bites

Zucchini quiche

| Nutritional information | |
|-------------------------|------------|
| Servings | 6 servings |
| Amount per serving | |
| Calories | 145 |
| Total fat | 5.5 g |
| Cholesterol | 26 mg |
| Sodium | 290 mg |
| Total carbs | 9.0 g |
| Dietary fiber | 1.3 g |
| Protein | 15 g |

Ingredients

- 4 zucchini, sliced thinly
- Garlic powder as desired
- 1 ½ cups shredded mozzarella cheese, divided
- 1 cup fat-free ricotta cheese
- 3 tbsp. Parmesan cheese, divided
- ¾ cup egg substitute
- ½ cup milk (skim or 1%)
- ½ tsp. salt
- Dash pepper
- ¾ tsp. dried basil
- Dash paprika

Directions

Sauté zucchini with garlic powder or fresh garlic in nonstick pan coated with cooking spray or olive oil and a bit of water.

In a bowl, mix 1 cup of the mozzarella cheese, ricotta, 2 tbsp. Parmesan, egg substitute, milk, salt, pepper and basil.

Place ¾ of the sautéed zucchini in the bottom of an 8" x 8" pan sprayed with cooking spray.

Pour cheese mixture on top.

Sprinkle with remaining ½ cup of mozzarella and 1 tbsp. Parmesan cheese.

Sprinkle with paprika.

Bake at 350 degrees for 30 minutes.

Cool and cut into 6 servings.

Options

- Add a layer of sliced tomatoes on top prior to the remaining mozzarella and Parmesan.
- Add chopped onions and/or sliced mushrooms to the zucchini while sautéing.

Source: SparkPeople.com/recipes

Patient spotlight

Aaron Smith: The inspiration to change



When Aaron Smith sank comfortably into an airplane seat bound for California, he felt the deep satisfaction of a hard-won goal. His once 518-pound body had slimmed down to fit into the seat without touching the sides. He and his fiancée, Kristen, were on their way to hike through Sequoia National Park to celebrate their engagement.

"You don't get the results you wish for; you get the results you work for," Smith said.

A sleeve gastrectomy procedure in June 2015 reduced his stomach to one quarter of its original size. With that impetus and a lot of hard work, he lost 305 pounds thus far and gained new freedom in his life.

The 36-year-old pastor of Clough Pike Baptist Church in eastern Cincinnati said that even as a child, he was considered a big kid. Despite his best efforts, he saw his weight climb when he took a desk job after college.

"I'm a very disciplined, regimented person," Smith said. "I did NutriSystem, Weight Watchers, the Atkins Diet and worked out. No matter what I tried, I'd lose two pounds and gain five."

At 375 pounds, he stopped getting on the scale. He continued, however, to be fairly active and had no particular health problems.

The tipping point

Two events occurred in November 2014 that changed his thinking and his life.

As a life coach and pastor, Smith was counseling a college student to be ready to embrace opportunities.

"We're supposed to be available if God calls us," he said. "If you don't have a passport and God tells you to go, you're not available."

He realized he wasn't practicing what he preached. "I thought, 'If God calls me to go somewhere, I can't travel on a plane or do manual labor without being winded,'" he said.

A visit to his primary care doctor for a sinus infection provided a second revelation:

"I got on the scale and weighed 518 pounds," Smith said. "I was in shock."

Not a magic pill

After a candid discussion with his family doctor, Smith went to see bariatric surgeon Dr. George Kertakian at TriHealth Weight Management Center, who laid out the benefits and risks of weight-loss surgery. Smith decided to pursue a sleeve gastrectomy to reduce the size of his stomach.

"I don't like going to doctors, and the thought of surgery is crazy to me," Smith said. "I thought, 'If I'm going to do this, I'm going to do it only once.'"

"This surgery is not a magic pill, but it's an amazing tool you can use to get where you want to be. I go to the gym five days a week. I stick to the regimen my doctors and dietitians set out for me. I see that I'm able to do much more now, and I feel great.

"It hasn't been easy, but I have gained the life I'm supposed to be living."