

NeWeigh Retreat 2005

The devastating impact of Hurricane Katrina on the entire Louisiana/ Mississippi Gulf Coast has also affected the Houston area. As a result, **the Retreat scheduled for Baton Rouge on October 8, 2005 has been cancelled** and changes have been made for the planned Retreat in Houston.

san antonio

October 22, 2005

Location: NeWeigh Office

Time	Guest Speaker	Activity
8:00am		Sign in and Morning Walk
9:00am	Melissa DeLeon, LPC	Discussion: Staying Positive and Staying On Track
10:00am	Regina Garcia-Galvan, MS, RD, LD	Meal Planning
11:00am	Suresh Koneru, MD	Plastic & Reconstructive Surgery
12:00 noon	Lunch Break	Compliments of NeWeigh
1:00pm	James Flowers, MA, LPC	Exercise, Stress Management, and Relaxation Therapy
3:00pm	Claudia Sharp	Before & After Style Show Door Prizes

houston

October 29, 2005

Location: NeWeigh Office

Time	Guest Speaker	Activity
8:00am		Sign in and Morning Walk
9:00am	Kathryn Blanchard, LMSW	Discussion: Staying Positive and Staying On Track
10:00am	Melissa Copeland, RD, LD	Meal Planning
11:00am	John LoMonaco, MD, FACS	Plastic & Reconstructive Surgery
12:00 noon	Lunch Break	Compliments of NeWeigh
1:00pm	James Flowers, MA, LPC	Exercise, Stress Management, and Relaxation Therapy
3:00pm	Kathryn Blanchard, LMSW	Before & After Style Show Door Prizes

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NeWeigh has been around since 1991, but not in San Antonio. Over the years, however, NeWeigh has assisted many who traveled from the San Antonio area for their surgical procedure. The demand was great; the choices were few. It eventually became obvious that NeWeigh should commit to establishing a local presence in order to better serve those in need. This became a reality in March 2005, and we are pleased to be here.

During the first six months, the community has embraced us, and we have been able to help many people secure surgery for their morbid obesity. The Aftercare support groups are now being held every Tuesday evening at 6:00pm. A monthly Saturday group will be up and running very soon.

Continued on page 8

Fifty and Fabulous

By Mollee Vicknair

Every day I count my blessings – for the miracle of life and for the gift of NeWeigh. I have beaten breast cancer, defeated the weight-related illness of high blood pressure and diabetes, and I'm well on my way to conquering morbid obesity. I have so much to be grateful for.



My obesity began as a child, and I came to believe that it would be with me for the rest of my life because I kept getting heavier and heavier. Marriage brought more weight gain, and childbearing resulted in my becoming even larger. By 1995, I was living with my husband and two children in Dallas. My daughter, Michelle, was a teenager and my son, Gary, was just a toddler. Life was difficult enough for me, even before I found out that I had breast cancer. My friends and family helped when they could, but my year was mostly filled with tears, prayer, treatment (a lumpectomy, followed by radiation

and chemotherapy), and more weight gain. The following year we moved from Dallas back to Baton Rouge. Our family and friends welcomed us home with open arms.

Three short years later, in 1999, we received another dreadful call – the cancer had returned. Once again, we prayed, cried and prayed some more, but this time my breast had to be removed. When my second round of treatments began, I could do very little to control my escalating weight; that, as much as anything else, was terribly worrisome.

By 2003, I was a 5-foot tall, 255-pound, miserable mess! I told myself, “You have survived TWO breast cancers, and now you have high blood pressure and diabetes. Get a grip and do something.”

While attending a family gathering, I had the opportunity to discuss my dilemma with one of my cousins, Dr. Michael Pyuau. Without hesitation, Mike told me about a surgical weight loss procedure that was highly effective in helping people resolve their weight problem. Shortly after our conversation, I discussed the matter with my husband and my father (who is also a physician). Fortunately for me, the procedure was being performed in Baton Rouge, so I headed for NeWeigh.

I actually started processing in June 2003, but a health scare in October caused me to stop the pursuit. I resumed my quest in August 2004, and shortly thereafter I ran into another glitch. It is called “Insurance Approval.” NeWeigh reassured me that they had no intention of accepting the insurers wrongful denial, and set about filing my appeal.

The Fall Retreat was approaching and I very much wanted to attend, whether I was a *little sister* or not. I really wanted to go off to Houston with my

“skinny” friends, so I did. While I was at the retreat, I tried to imitate everyone's eating habits, and I was truly inspired by all of the success stories that I heard. On this trip, more than ever, I resolved not to give up.

NeWeigh did, indeed, secure my approval, and I finally had my long awaited bypass surgery on December 20, 2004. The hospital's staff, Dr. Bellenger, and Holly were truly wonderful. My recovery was quick, and thus far I have lost 87 unwanted pounds. I can truthfully say that NeWeigh's personnel, Peggy, Leigh, Felicia and Bonnie are superb. They have encouraged, counseled and taught me the correct way to change my eating habits.

The NeWeigh Program offers support group meetings that provide me with opportunities to meet and make new friends. We all have so many things in common.

I have never had more energy, felt or looked better in my life. I celebrated my birthday on July 28, and I am not shy about saying that I am 50 and fabulous!



Hear Ye, Hear Ye! Revisited

An Update from Tracy Merryman

The decisions that you make today will affect the way you live life tomorrow. Hello, again! It is with pleasure that I submit an update on my progress as a NeWeigh Program Participant. A good-deal of time has passed (almost 2½ years), and my 5 year post-op anniversary as a surgical weight loss patient is rapidly approaching. For those who do not know me, you can get some idea of what my life was like before surgery; and, what it was like at 6 months and 2 years following surgery. ["Hear Ye, Hear Ye!" was originally published in the *NeWeigh News* Winter 2002 newsletter and is reprinted herein.]

Fast forward to the present: I am delighted to report that my life continues to be filled with good health (mental and physical) and joy. As I had once hoped, I did meet my initial surgical weight loss goal; within one year of surgery, I was wearing a size 10.

What is of subsequent importance is the fact that I have been able to sustain the weight loss and my clothing size (a comfortable 8/10). I firmly believe that surgery and the lifestyle changes that I have made over these past few years account for my improved health and that life will continue to be good.

Following surgery, I began to eat healthy foods and exercise daily. I still eat only when I am hungry and stop when I am comfortably full. I eat small meals and snack on raw veggies. By adopting appropriate eating habits and exercise routines I am able to keep my metabolism revved-up and, consequently, my weight down.

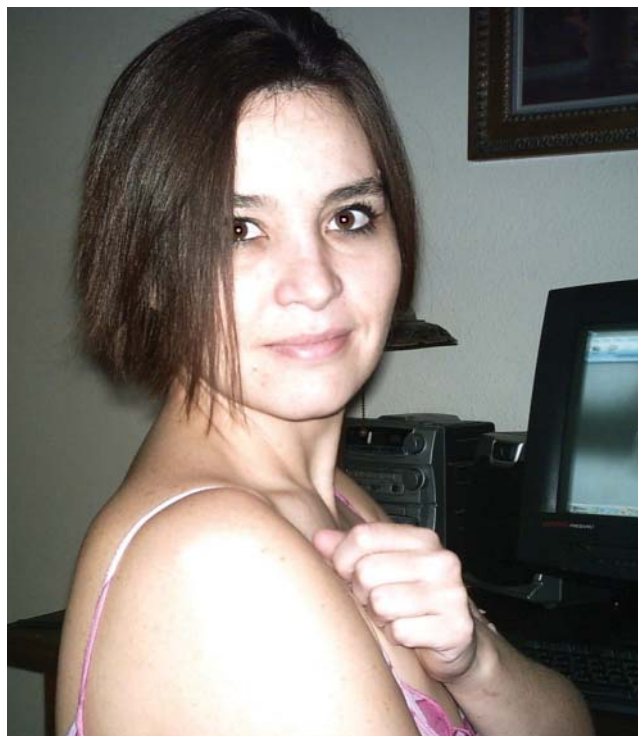
Additionally, I stayed the course by keeping my commitment to journal, and by surrounding myself with support persons.

Before I had weight loss surgery, I was told that most everyone experiences a *honeymoon phase*, which follows initial weight loss and that, at some point (usually between 6 months and a year), the *Cinderella syndrome* would end.

Being forewarned, I vowed that I would do everything within my power to keep from reverting to the type of life that I had prior to surgery. I was ready for hope to replace despair; to become secure rather than to remain insecure.

To help me stay in the *zone*, I decided to focus on some short-term, rather than long-term, goals. I knew that if I could achieve even the minutest daily accomplishments, I would have a better chance of making my lifestyle changes permanent. Evidently, my approach has worked because I continue to feel as if I am in the post-op celebratory stage.

Since surgery, I practice what I preach. I set small achievable goals. When I happen to have an occasional down day, I turn my thoughts to something that is good in my life. Simply reminding myself that I no longer have



to bear the heavy load that I once carried on my shoulders...my legs...my stomach...my hips and my mind, helps to lift my spirits and gives me reason to rejoice.

I clearly love being in great shape. I am enjoying a far better life today because of the decision that I made in 2000 to walk through NeWeigh's doors. Had I not changed my attitude about life, I doubt that my life would have actually changed.

If you, or anyone you know, could use a friend or would like a helping hand, count on me. I believe in kindhearted acts. Sharing and caring is what NeWeigh, its *little sisters* and *brothers* are all about. I can still be reached via the Internet: greekgurl3369@aol.com or darkeyetra@hotmail.com.

Be on the lookout for:

Notice of NeWeigh's Annual Christmas Event

Articles of interest published in the December and January issues of the *Ladies Home Journal*

Hear Ye, Hear Ye!

An Accounting of Life – Six Months Post-Op

By Tracy Merryman

To all my NeWeigh *Little Brothers & Sisters* and Wannabees:

I have great news that I want to share with everyone! I had weight loss surgery on December 28, 2000, and I am happier now than I have ever been in my life!

Overweight people often feel as if they have a split personality. You want to look as good as the next person, but you have these little voices in your head telling you things like you're hungry when you really aren't; little voices telling you that you aren't fat, you're just big-boned, so it's ok to keep eating. I believe some of you will agree with me that being overweight is, in fact, like having an extra person inside you and that extra person seems to be in control of many aspects of your life. In fact, it is that extra person who could very well be a threat to your life.

Then, there were the *other* people. You know! The ones that say, "...But, she has such a pretty face." I got so tired of hearing people saying that! Somehow these words made me feel as if people felt sorry for me. I was miserable.

Carrying so much weight around literally weighed me down, physically and emotionally.

It was a shame that I could not see myself the way that others saw me. As a matter of fact, I had gotten to the place that I was unable to look at myself in the mirror without being ashamed. I limited the time I spent in front of the mirror to just long



enough to put on my makeup or fix my hair. While I was in front of the mirror, I always avoided looking into my own eyes because I knew that I would hate what I would see. Could I ever recover from this – the excess weight – the negative feelings?

At the time of my surgery, I weighed a whopping 297 pounds and was wearing size 26 pants. After my surgery, I hurt for only three weeks. I lost a mere 8 lbs the first week. After that, I began to lose three to five pounds a week.

On June 28, I was down to 210 pounds!

That's 87 pounds in six months! With my height and body structure, I look good at about 160 pounds, so, I had about 50 more pounds to lose. I was getting into size 14 pants. I set my goal for a size 9 or 10.

Look what I have gained from my weight loss surgery, so far. My ten-year-old daughter is so proud of the fact that she can close her arms around me when she gives me a hug. People at work



can't believe their eyes! A female co-worker came into the computer room looking for me and passed me right up. She turned around to ask me if I had seen Tra...then, she realized it was me!

Strangely enough, before I had surgery, I wanted to keep my decision to have surgery under wraps. Well, not anymore, buddy! I look and I act like a different person.

When I learn of someone sitting in judgment of a person who has had surgery to lose weight, I get pretty protective. It irks me to hear someone who has

never had to struggle with a weight problem say, "What's wrong? Can't they lose weight like everyone else?" I no longer have any problem telling these uninformed people that they should refrain from making comments over things they know nothing about.

There is so much about weight loss surgery that I want everyone to know. When you lose weight, you can lose that extra person inside of you. You are able to discard those negative little voices and replace them with positive, loving ones. You are able to regain control of your life.

I am ALIVE and WELL and I am still losing weight every week. I figure that by November I will be able to walk into a store and just pick out a size 9 or 10 and know that it will fit. Now,

when I look into the mirror to fix my hair or to put on my makeup, I take the time to look into my eyes. I can actually see that I am happy.

Here are a few more things I would like to share with everyone:

▲ **Never Give Up.**

▲ Make a friend that you can talk to. One to whom you can relate.

▲ Set small goals (even if it is drinking more water).

▲ Keep a journal. Write in it every day, even if you don't feel like it. Even write down why you don't feel like journaling.

▲ **Never Give Up.**

▲ Don't stop reaching for the stars. They really aren't that far away!

▲ Exercise a little bit every day. Stop parking your car in the closest parking spot. Try to park a little further away from your destination each time.

▲ Use cleaning products as weights. I lift cans that I fill with a gallon of water.

▲ When you are sad and don't think you can do it, think of one thing that's good in your life and focus on it. Know that you will do it.

▲ When you are down and out, call me. I will be your friend. I will always be there to listen and to encourage you.

▲ Did I mention: **Never Give Up?!**

Update: On January 7, 2002, NeWeigh received an update from Tracy. She was bubbling over with excitement. She told us that on her one-year anniversary, she was wearing a size 10! Tracy also reported that her physician told her that she is now at a perfect weight. Tracy stated that downsizing from a 3X blouse to a medium size shirt is a real accomplishment.

Many weight loss patients want to know whether or not insurance will cover reconstructive surgery, post-gastroplasty. Dr. John LoMonaco M.D., F.A.C.S. is a board-certified plastic surgeon practicing in Houston, Texas. He offers this insightful article based on his years of experience with this issue. For more information on this subject or to contact Dr. LoMonaco call 713-526-5550 or visit www.drlomonaco.com.

Re-Shaping Expectations: Insurance Coverage Can Happen for Plastic Surgery

Many patients receive quick approval for their weight loss surgery because this type of surgery has a proven benefit to their long-term health. Weight loss surgery clearly saves patients from developing major health problems like diabetes, heart disease, high blood pressure, and joint problems. It can also reverse existing conditions. Plastic surgery, however, does not have as clear cut a benefit to health, so insurance companies are often more reluctant to cover it.

In addition, the techniques required in plastic surgery far exceed the standard plastic surgery procedures used for non-weight loss patients. Therefore, insurance reimbursement to physicians is, on average, far less than half the standard fees in the community for these services. Add that to the bureaucratic hassle and delayed payments to the surgeon, and it is easy to see why many surgeons are hesitant to work with insurance companies.

The cornerstone of most insurance companies' approval process is based on the idea of "medical necessity." That means that the excess skin of the abdomen or thighs must be causing a medical problem such as skin rashes, infection, or skin breakdown. Sometimes issues like low back pain may be considered. On occasion, the amount of overhanging abdominal skin is very large, and coverage can be obtained based just on photographs. The skin excess must usually extend below the pubic region to be considered for coverage. In most cases, however, the patient and physician must prove that removal of the excess abdominal skin is medically necessary.

The definition of what is medically needed varies according to each insurance plan, but typically the

companies want to see symptoms of skin problems that have been treated repeatedly with prescription medications and doctor visits, yet continue to occur. Often, a time period of 6 months is specified by the plans. Statements from physicians or chiropractors indicating that the weight of excess skin may affect the lumbar spine may also be helpful. The presence of another condition that requires surgery, such as a hernia, may also lessen the financial burden of plastic surgery if a combined procedure is undertaken.

Breast tissue often sags after weight loss surgery, and skin irritation may occur. This must be documented to obtain coverage for a breast lift. Female patients who have very large breasts may be approved for breast reduction if 500cc of tissue is removed from each breast (a total of about 1 pound per side). Many weight loss patients actually have an excess of skin, not breast tissue, making this option available to a minority of patients.

Obtaining insurance coverage for plastic surgical procedures requires advance preparation, a concerted team effort, and an organized approach. Below are some tips that can help.

Establish Expectations Early

Find out early from peers, support groups, and an early consultation with a plastic surgeon what is involved in post-bariatric plastic surgery, then determine if you are committed to this route. Plastic surgery is often more involved and has a longer recovery than the original bariatric procedure. More than one procedure may be required to get the results you deserve and insurance rarely covers 100% of every procedure. For example, there are no insurance codes for reconstructing the belly button, performing a

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Good Nutrition = Post Surgery Weight Loss Success

By Regina K. Galvan-Garcia, MS, RD, LD

As you well know, surgery is a *tool* to help you lose weight. However, in order to achieve weight loss success (lose body fat and retain lean muscle mass), you must learn how to diet and exercise correctly. Below are some very useful nutrition hints that will get you started down the right path.

1. Watch your caloric intake.
2. Weigh yourself consistently.
3. Keep a food diary.
4. Remember portion control.
5. Eat nutritious foods.
6. Protein, protein, protein!
7. Do not skip meals.
8. Take your vitamin & mineral supplements.

Let's take a closer look into how and why we recommend that you follow these suggestions.

Count calories

Some of the most common habits that lead to success after surgery have to do with calorie control and self-monitoring. One pound of body fat is equivalent to 3,500 calories. Unfortunately, these calories were never utilized.

In order to lose one pound per week, 500 calories must be deducted from the calories you have "taken in", or 500 calories must be added to the calories you are "taking out". This is because body weight is determined by the ratio between "calories in" versus "calories out". Your surgery assists in producing this calorie loss.

Weigh in

Weighing yourself at the same time of day, on the same day of the week, in the same type of clothing, on the same scale, leads to continuity and less discrepancy.

Record your progress

Keeping a food diary is a great eye-opening tool. It is very easy to lose track of what you have eaten even several hours before, especially when you are doing other things that may distract you. A diary helps you monitor protein grams as well as calories.

Watch those helpings

Portion control is your key to success. Some patients regain lost weight because they eat until they are overfed

or "stuffed", eat a diet of primarily high-calorie, high-fat food, and they snack or graze too often. You must know the size of your pouch, and how much it can hold (usually 4 ounces or ½ cup at a time). Try to make each meal last at least 20 minutes, and stop eating when you are comfortably full. Feeling satisfied is what you want to experience after a meal.

Eat the right foods

Foods high in protein as well as those high in fiber help achieve satiety. You will not experience this after snacking or grazing. To slow down the rate that food leaves your pouch, avoid drinking 30 minutes before and after a meal.

Limiting calorie intake is easy to achieve with some restraint of certain foods. One way to do this is to limit your intake of sweets and snack foods, fast food and restaurant food, and high calorie drinks. For some, starches can also be a problem when it comes to

moderation. Nutrient dense foods are the best choice to put in your pouch such as lean meats, fish, poultry, low-fat dairy products, fruits and vegetables, and high fiber breads and cereals.

Protein comes first

Adequate protein intake is crucial after surgery. You should be eating at least 2 ounces of high protein food at each meal. Eat these foods before eating any thing else on your plate. Your protein should be a food source containing less than 200 calories; supplement if needed. Protein bars may be better for some since they create a greater sense of fullness than liquids do.

Never skip a meal

Skipping meals can lead to dumping and weight gain. Eating regular meals helps maintain weight because you are not trying to make up for what you missed with either more food or higher calorie foods.

Satisfy your vitamin & mineral requirements

Remember, surgery "reengineered" you, so to speak, and due to the size of your pouch, you are unable to meet your vitamin and mineral requirements. Consequently, vitamin and mineral supplementation is crucial, and is best absorbed with food. Vitamin B12 needs to be supplemented because your pouch no longer produces enough intrinsic factor allowing for proper absorption. Since the stomach (bypassed with the surgery) was a primary area for absorbing calcium and iron, supplementation is now necessary.

As you can see, there are several things that you can do to make your surgery a success and a lot of it has to do with nutrition. This is a lifestyle changing process, but well worth the effort!



Weight Loss Success Requires Awareness

By Kathryn Blanchard, LMSW

So how much have you lost? When did you have surgery? How tall are you? These are some of the questions asked on any given day

in the NeWeigh waiting room and in the Aftercare Support Groups.

I have been leading NeWeigh's Aftercare Support Groups for over three years now, and I understand the need for people who have not yet had surgery to take "stats" on those of us who have. As a matter of fact, before I had my surgery, I asked those very same questions.

Every time I came to Aftercare or to my pre-op appointments, I would keep a running spreadsheet (only in my mind of course) of all of the post-op patients I met and their progress. I would then do some quick calculations in my head: "If he has lost 80 pounds in 3 months, I will lose 80 pounds by August." Shortly after surgery, I realized that it does not work that way. Why was I comparing myself to someone whose genetics or metabolism was different from my own? What made me think that there was a "cookie cutter" way to calculate weight loss?

You will come to learn, as I did, that everyone loses weight at a different rate, and that the numbers on the scale do not steadily drop. In fact, there may be some weeks when the numbers stay the same or even go up a little. When this happens, do not despair. There are some simple steps that you can take that will help you improve the situation.

Begin by asking yourself some awareness questions. Have I set realistic weight loss goals? Am I still following the Basic Principles of eating small, frequent meals? Am I getting enough protein, water or exercise? Am I focusing on attaining a healthy weight rather than on a certain dress or pant size?

Once you set realistic goals, make dietary and exercise adjustments where necessary, and understand what triggers overeating, you will be well on your way to achieving your weight loss potential.

Bear in mind, that even after surgery, the urge to overeat can still exist. Changing how you eat is not easy, especially in a society where there is no shortage of delicious foods. To help you acquire healthier eating practices, follow along, learn about yourself and begin thinking about a strategy or two you can try.

What entices you to overeat?

- Habit – Clean your plate. Anger. Boredom. Loneliness. Celebrations.
- Restaurant *super-size* portions – Waste not; want not.
- Stress – Distraction.
- Sedentary lifestyles – Major upset to internal appetite controls.
- Years of fad diets – Wrong messages. "Eat all you want and still lose weight."

To help you break the habit of overeating:

- Do not take your surgical *tool* for granted.
- Stop eating once you have *gently* satisfied your hunger.
- Remember, that in the long run, eating appropriately has more rewards than the immediate gratification of over-eating.
- Order reduced portions.
- Share an entrée; take uneaten portions of food home.
- Recognize that there will be days when you will experience difficulties controlling your internal appetite. To avoid feelings of guilt, have a list of pre-selected foods that you stick with during this vulnerable time.
- Do not revert to the diet mentality; this actually leads to overeating.
- Do not skip meals or snacks. Eat **mini** meals – **Not many!**
- Accumulate at least 30 minutes of moderate to intense physical exercise throughout the day.
- Stop eating halfway through your meal; ask yourself if you are still hungry. If you are *gently* satisfied, stop eating.

Note: The Fall edition of the NeWeigh News will feature Healthy Weight Philosophy.

What Do Support Groups Provide?

In case you have forgotten, Group is designed to offer participants:

- Emotional Support
- Coping Techniques
- Socializing
- Behavior Modification
- Personal Development
- Nutritional Information

Attendance in Support Groups has proven to be beneficial in aiding surgical weight loss patients improve their long-term surgical outcomes.

HOUSTON AFTERCARE SCHEDULE

Group	Date & Time	Facilitator
Basic	Wednesdays 6:00-7:00pm	Carla Spillman
Intermediate	Thursdays 6:00-7:00pm	Kathryn Blanchard, LMSW
Advanced	Thursdays 7:15-8:15pm	Kathryn Blanchard, LMSW
Saturday	3rd Weekend of the Month 11-Noon	Kathryn Blanchard, LMSW

SAN ANTONIO AFTERCARE SCHEDULE

Group	Date & Time	Facilitator
Basic & Intermediate	Tuesdays 6:00-7:00pm	Melissa DeLeon, LPC

Learning from you

The best way to accommodate our Program participants is to listen and learn from you. A great big thanks to Jobina, Anthony and Cynthia for sharing:

- ▲ **How they learned of NeWeigh's services**
- ▲ **Once exposed to our program, what prompted them to continue**
- ▲ **What their expectations were**
- ▲ **What their experience was like**
- ▲ **What their concerns were about having surgery in a smaller hospital**
- ▲ **How their hospital stay differed from any other hospital confinement**

"My experience far exceeded my expectations."

– Jobina Rico

Jobina: I heard about NeWeigh via radio. When I called, I found the NeWeigh staff to be helpful, informative, warm, and friendly. I had several friends who had surgery through another program, and they received little or no help with the insurance process. My friends also told me that the support was not there either. Even though Innova is a smaller hospital, the care that I received there was excellent. The Innova staff was very attentive, which made me feel extremely comfortable. I have already recommended many of my friends to NeWeigh, and if I ever need to be hospitalized again, I can only hope that the care I get at another hospital will equal what I received at Innova.

"NeWeigh gave me the courage and assistance to move forward – Innova Hospital's staff made me glad I did."

– Anthony Carbajal

Anthony: I heard about NeWeigh through various friends at work (Time Warner Cable of San Antonio) who have undergone surgical weight loss. NeWeigh, I discovered, was the place to go for help.

After I contacted NeWeigh, I felt very comfortable because everyone was very empathetic and seemed to know exactly how I felt about myself. In spite of that, I was still fearful. It wasn't until I spoke with Claudia Sharp, however, that I knew I was ready. She was so very nice and helpful that it gave me confidence and strength to do this. The NeWeigh staff was awesome. There was never a negative moment spent with NeWeigh.

In the beginning, I was concerned that I had never heard of Innova Hospital. As it turned out, my anxiety was unwarranted. The entire staff at Innova Hospital in San Antonio was caring, and affectionate. I got to know every member of the Innova Staff and they immediately made me feel welcome. Bigger hospitals are great, but I just feel that I would not get the attention I deserve. On the other hand, the caring and gentleness of Innova's staff made me feel safe; I knew that they would not let anything happen to me because they checked on me 24/7. Given the choice between Innova and a big general hospital, I would definitely choose Innova. I am grateful to them all. Thank you guys, I will never forget you!

I have had many friends and co-workers ask me how to go about this process. I say, call NeWeigh. That's the only call you have to make, because they will take care of everything for you. You will be in good hands!

"NeWeigh offers a personal touch unlike any other bariatric program."

– Cynthia Shealy

Cynthia: I heard NeWeigh's message on the radio. Claudia answered my call. She was very helpful and made me feel at ease. No one can keep you motivated the way Claudia can. NeWeigh truly offers a personal touch unlike any other bariatric program that I am aware of. Everyone, including the doctor and hospital staff had the most incredible way of making me feel completely secure. Their personal care and the prompt response to my needs were really impressive.

I weighed 268 pounds six weeks ago and I have lost 32 pounds, so far. I love Group and it gives me a great deal of pleasure to be able to help others in the group. Helping out, helps me, as well.

"The highest compliment you can give is the referral of your friends and family. Thank you for your trust."

– Diane Crumley,
President, NeWeigh

Thanking you

We appreciate the trust that you have in NeWeigh and Innova. We have received many referrals and would like to say thanks. We believe that you should expect to receive personalized care when you are admitted to a hospital.

Thank You

ObesityHelp.com is a very popular website that is used by many who are looking for information about surgical weight loss. As a facilitator for a Bariatric program, NeWeigh is always looking for feedback from our program participants. If you have not already done so, please share your experiences with us. Log on to ObesityHelp.com. and sign up as instructed below:

Profiles on Our Site

For New Members

Would you like to become a member of our site?

1. Go to the Sign Up form on ObesityHelp. There are 2 ways to reach the Sign up form. Click the "Sign Up" link from obesityhelp.com's main page <http://www.obesityhelp.com/>



Then click on the "Join" link
<http://www.obesityhelp.com/ohsignup/>



2. On the first page, in the first section: "who is/was your surgeon?"
 - Select NeWeigh Program Houston, San Antonio or Baton Rouge in the drop down list.
 - Answer NO to the question "Would you possibly be interested in any help with: Finding a bariatric surgeon?"
 - Complete the requested information on page 1.
 - Click the "Next" button.
3. On page 2, you will be presented with the option of purchasing items that may be of interest to you as a weight loss patient. *This is purely optional.* Either select your item or click "Next".
4. On page 3, answer "NO" to the question, "Would you like to receive information about bariatric surgery?" You may choose to provide additional information, as well. *This is purely optional.* Click the "Next" button when done.
5. On page 4, there will be space for you to provide information about your Weight Loss Program History. *This is purely optional.* Click the "Next" button when done.
6. Page 5 is your confirmation screen linking you to a log in for your new account. Click this link. **To update your information, skip to Step 2 in the next section.**

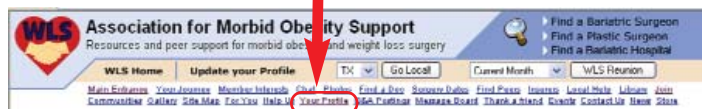
For Existing Members

Changing and updating your information

1. Log into your account on obesityhelp.com. You can reach your log in area several ways. Examples are outlined below. Click the "Log In" link from obesityhelp.com's main page <http://www.obesityhelp.com/>



Then click on "Your Profile" link
<http://www.obesityhelp.com/morbidobesity/newauthenter.phtml>



2. Read the table below for the most common areas and follow the matching directions. We encourage you to explore all of the areas in your Personal Account Center. For personalized assistance email the Web Department at webmaster@obesityhelp.com.

Area you want to change	How to do it
Personal Information (name, address, email, personal comments)	Click the General Info link
To add or update your comments about the NeWeigh Program	Click the Your Surgeon link
To list or update your Surgery Date	Click the I've Got A Date! link
To add/update your photos	Email your photos to Nikki@obesityhelp.com
To provide a testimonial on the hospital in which you had surgery	Click on Review Hospitals
If you have questions about ObesityHelp or need assistance with any of the above.	Email Nikki@obesityhelp.com or call toll free at 1-866-957-4636 ext 354

Concerned about privacy?

If you don't want your profile to show up on ObesityHelp, log into your profile, set your Profile Visibility field question #1 to "NO".

If you don't want your profile to show up on this site, select "NO" for question "#2 Helping your surgeon:".

Snack Ideas

By Diane Crumley, President, NeWeigh

The annual American Society for Bariatric Surgery Conference was held at the Gaylord Palms Hotel in Orlando, Florida this past June. I had hoped that I would be able to find some free time to avail myself of the services of the hotel's Canyon Ranch Spa Club, but "No such luck." I did, however, manage to pick up a brochure from the Spa, and I was surprised to discover that it contained some simple snack savvy recipes that were high in nutrient value. When you get the urge to nibble on some tidbits, give these recipes a try. The combination of protein and/or healthy fats with carbohydrates can help you satisfy your appetite and stabilize blood sugar levels. The fruits and vegetables help prevent disease. Best of all, it takes little or no fuss to prepare most of these snacks.

Miso Soup with Tofu

1 teaspoon miso paste (available in health food stores and Asian markets)
8 ounces boiling water
2 tablespoons chopped green onions
¼ cup firm tofu, cubed
¼ cup cooked brown rice (optional)
¼ cup chopped spinach (optional)
2 to 3 drops sesame oil (optional)

In a soup bowl or large mug gradually stir the boiling water into the miso paste until mixed. Add green onions and tofu. Stir in brown rice, spinach, and sesame oil if desired. Makes 1 serving.

Calories 166 ▪ Protein 12 grams ▪ Fat 7 grams ▪ Carbs 16 grams ▪ Fiber 2 grams

Tuna Apple Spread

4 ounces white albacore tuna packed in water, drained
1 apple, chopped
3 tablespoons almonds or pecans, chopped
2 tablespoons low-fat mayonnaise

Combine the tuna, apples and nuts.
Add mayonnaise and mix well. Makes 3 servings.

Calories 157 ▪ Protein 17 grams ▪ Fat 9 grams
Carbs 12 grams ▪ Fiber 2 grams

*These snack ideas
can be enjoyed
at home, at the office,
or on the run!*

Smoked Salmon Dill Spread

1 ounce low-fat cream cheese
1 teaspoon Dijon mustard
2 teaspoons honey
4 ounces smoked hunk salmon
¼ cup finely chopped celery
1 teaspoon dill weed

In a small bowl, blend cream cheese, mustard and honey until smooth.
Add remaining ingredients and mix until it reaches spreading consistency.
Makes 2 servings.

Calories 125 ▪ Protein 12 grams ▪ Fat 5 grams ▪ Carbs 8 grams ▪ Fiber 1 gram

A good rule of thumb is to balance your diet by eating a variety from all food groups: carbohydrates, protein, and good fat.

Very Berry Smoothie

1 cup frozen blueberries
¼ cup nonfat dry milk powder
½ cup skim or 1% milk
¼ cup water

Add all ingredients to blender container. Cover and blend on high speed until smooth.

Makes 1 serving.

Calories 183
Protein 11 grams ■ Fat 1 gram
Carbs 14 grams ■ Fiber 4 grams

Yogurt Spinach Spread

5 ounces frozen chopped spinach, thawed and drained
¼ cup plain nonfat yogurt
½ cup fat-free sour cream
2 teaspoons seasoning mix, like Mrs. Dash

Combine all ingredients and stir until well mixed. Makes 3 servings.

Calories 64
Protein 4 grams ■ Fat trace
Carbs 11 grams ■ Fiber 1 gram

Plastic Surgery continued from page 5

pubic lift, sculpting the abdominal muscles, or performing a buttock lift; yet, these are integral parts of most procedures, and the results are far from attractive if they are not done. So you should expect and plan for out-of-pocket expenses, sometimes significant ones. There are various financing companies available, and some physicians' offices are willing to work out arrangements with patients before surgery.

Team Build for Success

Next, you must have the help of a dedicated and willing set of physicians in order to be successful in obtaining insurance coverage. It is important that the plastic surgeon be prepared to work with you and your insurance company. You will need help organizing your documents and filing appeals. You will also need assistance from your primary care physician, OB-gyn, and bariatric surgeon to document medical necessity. Your Human Resources director or plan administrator can be a valuable advocate for you with the insurance company.

Do not rule out doctors who are not on your plan. Many are flexible with pricing because they are not contracted with the insurance company. Most have worked out pricing and special fee arrangements with the hospitals for their private patients, and that helps bring down costs.

Document, document, document

Many patients treat their own skin conditions, and do not seek medical

attention. If you are having skin irritation or other issues, you must go to the doctor for examination and treatment. All records and prescriptions from each visit should be documented and saved. Keep your receipts and copy the actual prescriptions. Your plastic surgeon should catalog and submit these documents and "build a case" justifying the need for the procedures. Be sure you understand what procedures your surgeon is requesting approval for. Photography of skin problems, either taken by you or your surgeon, serves as a valuable part of the medical record.

Be a Patient Patient

The time involved in submitting paperwork and waiting for a reply can be agonizingly long for both patients and physicians. Surgeons should keep patients informed of their progress. You may also contact your insurance company to inquire about the disposition of your request. Most plans have a defined period for review. By knowing the required timeline outlined in your Plan, you will be able to keep the company on schedule.

A denial can be disheartening. To avoid a poorly planned appeal, you will need to furnish additional documentation or rebuttal the denial. You will need to rely upon your plastic surgeon's ability to explain why your appeal should be overturned based on the problems you are experiencing.

The groundwork for success requires proper planning, a team effort, and realistic expectations.

EXERCISE TIPS

Transforming yourself began with the power of your mind. You proceeded with weight loss surgery and the aftercare support groups helped you learn how to restock your kitchen with wholesome foods. By the time you entered the intermediate support groups you were given tips on how to get moving. A well-rounded regimen is needed to keep those unwanted pounds from returning. Remember, to be healthy requires more than weight loss. We want you to lose fat — not muscle.

Ask your physician if you are ready to start the training methods outlined below:

Cardio: Walking, biking, kickboxing, treadmill. Try to perform this type of exercise at least three to five times a week for 30 minutes at a time.

Weights: Alternate training the major muscles of the upper and lower body. Try to perform this type of exercise two to three times per week. On days you train your upper body, include chest, shoulders, back, triceps, and biceps. If you are working on the lower body, include quadriceps, hamstrings, and calves.

NOTE: Try to perform three sets of each exercise. With each set, increase the weight and decrease the repetitions. When you first begin, limit the reps between 12 to 20. Decrease the second set between 12 to 15. The last set should be between 8 to 10. For each muscle group, rest 1 minute between each set and 2 minutes before starting the next muscle group. When your fitness level increases, ramp up the intensity. Remember to stretch and warm up before you perform any exercise and to cool down at the end of your workout.

With you in mind...

NeWeigh has always designed its offices to be inviting to its Program participants. It has been our dream to become associated with a Hospital that would specialize in the treatment of morbid obesity. Included in our wish list was a Hospital that would have a tasteful décor, a calming and healing atmosphere, as well as, one that housed all of the disciplines for the participants' convenience. Our wish is coming true. Innova Hospital - Houston, 2001 Hermann Drive, is scheduled to open mid to late November, 2005. It is everything we wished for and more!



The New Orleans style building is set among mature oak trees and the setting is intimate and tranquil. While the hospital is state of the art, it is filled with antiques reflecting old world charm. The patient rooms are private and spacious, designed for the comfort of patients and their guests. When you are not walking the hallways, you can enjoy the flat screen TV's or simply look out the window and watch the golfers on the 17th fairway of Hermann Park Golf Course. Parking is still surface and complimentary. We will be updating you regarding other planned services.

For your convenience, NeWeigh will be relocating its Stadium Drive office to the Innova campus. Our new office will be more accommodating than ever. We will keep you posted on the progress of our move.



8111 N. Stadium Drive
Houston, TX 77054

Seeking a Rewarding Career?

If you have good communications skills, enjoy people, and find satisfaction in helping others, you may wish to place your resume on file with NeWeigh. Send resume via fax to 713-795-0300 or email info@neweighweb.com.

If you wish to have your name removed from NeWeigh's mailing list, please call 713-795-0200 or send an email to info@neweighweb.com