

## *My Banded Life*

In January 2007 I heard about LapBand from a television commercial. I had never heard about this weight loss tool before. Having struggled with obesity for most of my adult life it looked like it could be an option for me. I went to the LapBand website and found a local surgeon that was doing the procedure. So lucky for me that I found Surgical Weight Loss Specialists! I called and got on the list for the information seminar in March 2007. While at the seminar I asked a lot of questions. I was so excited when I left the seminar because I was confident that the LapBand would work for me.

I was tired of being exhausted all the time. I was tired of having sore feet every day. I was tired of worrying about whether a chair would hold my weight or not. I was tired of walking into a room full of people and looking around to see if I was the heaviest person there. I was tired of my Daughter ashamed of my size. I was tired of everyone assuming I was lazy because I was overweight.

I met with Dr. Adam Glasgow in April 2007. He did an examination, asked me some questions, and explained the procedure and the pretesting requirements. He told me I was a good candidate for the procedure and someone would get back to me shortly with a schedule of the preoperative testing. That's when Jayne Smith started working her magic. She told me when to go in for each of the pre-op tests. She made it so easy for me – all I had to do was show up.

I weighed 324 pounds in April 2007 when I started my new life. I started a "modified" weight watcher diet plan. In addition, I increased my walking activities up to 5 miles per day.

The preoperative testing took about two and a half months to complete and the results were sent to Dr. Adam Glasgow to see if I was a candidate for the procedure. I think I was at work when Jayne called and told me that I was approved and that I needed to schedule my preoperative appointment with Dr. Adam Glasgow as well as schedule the surgery. I was so excited!

I started my pre-op liquid diet on July 16, 2007. That was hard, but knowing that my surgery would be safer by following it, I followed it to a "t". My sugar free Popsicle addiction started then. I would eat a few popsicles at night while I watched television. I started going to bed earlier during the pre-op period because I found it easier to cope with eating less if I slept more.

I weighed 287 the morning of surgery - I was so ready! They took very good care of me at Caritas Norwood Hospital. I had issues with nausea after the surgery, but the nurses were very helpful and it seemed to me like I was there only patient. It's hard to sleep at the hospital so I was glad to have my barium swallow the following morning. I was sent home and told to continue on clear liquids for two days and then start on the Stage III liquid diet for two weeks.

It was not a painful surgery. In fact, because of the nausea issues I was having I only took liquid Tylenol for the pain once I left the hospital. I had two weeks off from work after my surgery. I could have gone back after the week, but I'm glad that I didn't because every afternoon I took advantage of having the time off by having an afternoon nap. I was more tired than usual for about a month after the surgery. It was a good time to get a hold of the emotional side effects that I had from being an overeater to being on a limited liquid diet. I got grouchy for a few days while I was morning overeating. I continued with my walking routine the day after surgery, although I had to build up to my five miles over a couple of weeks.

After a couple of weeks on the Stage III liquid diet I switched to the Stage IV diet which is the pureed food stage. I never loved mashed potatoes more than I did then. It seemed like real food to me.

The Stage IV diet went well and after two weeks I was allowed to have solid foods. This is when I started to have a bit of a struggle with eating slow enough. I got tuna stuck because I ate too fast. Dr. Arthur Glasgow helped me get unstuck. I ended up buying some one minute egg timers to use between bites to make sure I waited long enough before my next bite.

When I went to my annual physical in January 2008 my primary care doctor didn't recognize me walking down the hall. She was so pleased with my results.

In April 2008 I hit a milestone. I was less than 200 pounds for the first time in more than twenty years. I had a lot of happy tears the morning my scale showed 199! I called my Daughter that day and told her I finally weighed less than 200 pounds. I hadn't told her my weight before then. She told me she was proud of me and she was relieved because she could stop worrying about my weight problem. It never dawned on me that she was worrying about my weight problem until she told me that she could stop worrying about it.

It seemed like the first year went by in a blink. It wasn't easy, but it wasn't that hard either. The band won't let me overeat. I think of it as my "belly cop". I made good food choices most of the time and

exercised frequently. On July 26, 2008 I weighed 187 pounds, exactly 100 pounds lighter than my surgery weight. I felt like a new person. I know it's crazy, but I felt like I was 15 years younger because I had so much more energy. I have gotten low as 174 pounds, but as of November 2010 my weight fluctuates between 185 - 195. I had no idea what my weight goal would be when started. I did know that I wanted to be able to wear a size 12 or 14. I have been wearing a size 12's and 14's comfortably for about two years now.

In May 2009 I had abdominoplasty (tummy tuck) surgery to get rid of my excess abdominal skin. I had issues with rashes. Dr Arthur Glasgow helped provide pictures and documentation so that I had partial insurance coverage for the surgery. Now when I look in the mirror I see an average size woman. I'm so happy with the results!

I have been a patient of the Surgical Weight Loss Specialists for more than three years now. They've all taken such good care of me. There were a few times the scale went up a few pounds and they offered suggestions and/or fills to get it going in the right direction again. They never made me feel badly about a few pounds. In fact, most of the time they made me feel good. The funny thing is that I think I make them feel good too because I truly believe they get pleasure from their patients' weight loss success. I've read that follow up with your LapBand surgeon is critical to a bandster's success. The doctors at the Surgical Weight Loss Specialists make it easy to come back. They're very down to earth doctors that are so easy to talk to.

I get a lot out of attending the support group meetings that the Surgical Weight Loss Specialists offer to their patients. I learn so much from listening to the other bandsters' questions and suggestions. It's also helpful that they have a nutritionist at all of the support group meetings.

I like to answer questions other bandsters have both prior to and after surgery. I'm glad to help anyone because I want him/her to feel as good as I do. I'm listed as a band buddy/mentor and would be glad to help anyone who calls or emails.

My only regret with my LapBand is that I didn't get it sooner!

Sue