



# Surgical Obesity Services

## Karen's Story...

Next Christchurch clinic: November 26th 2011

At the age of 18 I was 69 kg and I started my first diet with Jenny Craig when my boyfriend told me I was overweight. This is the common story over the next 20 years, of trying every diet in fashion at the time, and none of them lasting the long haul. After each attempt, I would gain more weight.



June 2009 = 108kg

In September 2008, (18 years later) at Movieworld in Australia, I had to struggle to close the safety bar on a ride. People watched me as I pushed and prodded my tummy so the bar would click. I was extremely embarrassed *and* ashamed of myself.

Some months later I visited my doctor with constant pain in my feet. I was having trouble walking and the pain was really getting me down. She diagnosed me with Plantar Fasciitis. I would have to visit a podiatrist and possibly get inserts for my shoes or, losing weight might

remedy the problem. My doctor knew of my battle with weight and mentioned about having a gastric bypass. I had known a couple of people who had had the operation years ago, but *I personally* had always thought of it as an easy way out... Losing weight should be something I could do – others did it all the time, with some self-discipline and motivation, so why couldn't I?

Luckily for me, my doctor is an amazing and positive lady and by the end of my appointment I was seriously thinking that this could be an option, and not one to be ashamed of. I started to get excited. With the possibility of my medical insurance paying for almost half of the operation, it was even easier to justify.

Once I made up my mind, it only took a couple of weeks for my initial day of consultation's, an operation date was booked for the 28<sup>th</sup> July 2009, which was a few weeks later. My weight was 108 kg.

By the time I started my pre-op diet a week later I had gained 2 kgs (catching up on the foods I may never enjoy again!!) and weighed 110 kgs, the biggest I had ever been. I was nervous about sticking to the pre-op diet, but knowing the operation would go much smoother if I followed it properly, made it easy. The two weeks flew by, and by the morning of the operation, I weighed 105 kg.

After my operation, the weight literally fell off and it wasn't long before I started to feel better about me, to feel worthy and positive about my future and within a few weeks, my feet were feeling better. I could finally get out of bed without grabbing onto the furniture for support.

Friends and family have watched the weight slip from me. Some of them are aware of how I have lost the weight, others I have not been so open with. Some have been extremely supportive; others have ignored my changes completely. But the most important factor in losing weight is my own self-growth.

The mind is an amazing organ, as David has said all along. I have recorded my weight loss, regularly decreased my clothing size, and had people comment on my progress. Yet until the last few months and 45 kg lighter, I had still seen myself as an overweight person. I have been constant at 63 kg for about 8 months now; 2 kg below my goal and I love being able to put on any clothes and feel comfortable and confident.

I did have one side effect of the operation, which alarms me, and that is I transferred one addiction for another. Whilst I was able to console myself previously with the wrong foods, I now found I was drinking alcohol as my release instead. It is something I have sought external help with, and David's team was a supportive network and not at all judgemental. I have since managed to control this addiction also, with ongoing support, but have had to learn to take each day as it comes and transfer my energy into other areas - hobbies and choosing the people you associate with and when, are a big part.

**Be proud of yourself.** What you do, is aided by the tool David and his team have given you, but how you use it and what you get from it is completely due to your own determination.

For as long as I can remember, I have had a goal for when I lost weight and that was to be an experienced scuba diver. I am so happy to have been able to accomplish this dream and in January I completed my PADI Open Water Dive Course - something I definitely would not have done at my previous weight! I now enjoy being more active with my children, and showing them that any dream is possible to achieve.



Nov 2011 = 63 kg

My gratitude goes to my Doctor Linda, David, Zola, Carol, Donna and Ann. Words cannot express how I feel about myself now and what changes I have been able to make to my life, and that of my family's.

## 2011 WLS Conference:

The 2011 Weight Loss Surgery (WLS) conference is to be held in Palmerston North on November 18-20th. Visit [www.weightlossurgery.co.nz](http://www.weightlossurgery.co.nz) to register or for more information.

### Physical hunger VS head hunger:

Over the last few months I have come to realise that people are confusing these two types of hunger. The fact is they are very different. Physical hunger is the hunger you get before a main meal - in general after weight loss surgery, physical hunger often reduces (as long as you are following the rules). Some of the major reasons that physical hunger returns are:

**-Not having enough protein at the previous meal.**

**-Leaving too large a 'gap' between meals.**

**-Too many carbohydrates.**

**-Eating and drinking close to each other.**

Each meal - breakfast, lunch and dinner, need to have 20grams of protein. If this is done, physical hunger is less common and you should be physically satisfied for 4-5 hours, thus getting you to your next meal.

If your meals are excessively delayed, i.e. lunch is at 12pm, then dinner is at 9pm, this gap is too large and it is unlikely that your lunch will be able to tie you over this gap. In this case I would recommend delaying your meals, have breakfast later 10-11am, lunch at 3-4pm, then dinner will be fine at 9pm. It is all a matter of planning and adjusting your schedule.

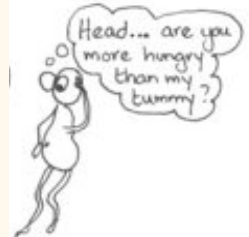
Too many carbs will increase your blood sugars. In order to balance the raise in blood sugar levels, insulin levels are increased. Then blood sugar levels drop rapidly - leaving you dissatisfied and hungry before it is time for your next meal. Therefore carbs need to be AVOIDED as they are often the source of all weight regain. Protein however, has a more constant release of energy, therefore a protein rich diet has higher satiety.

Eating and drinking separately is very important, having fluid before a meal is harmless, however, drinking after a meal will push the food through your pouch, not allowing time for your brain to register that it has eaten and this can increase hunger pre-maturely. Consumption of fluid immediately after a meal can also cause the pouch to stretch. Leave 1 hour after eating before you resume drinking.

The over all take home message is to get in **20grams** of protein per meal - **at least** - and to keep meals well spaced, this will keep physical hunger away.

**Now to talk about head hunger** - this is the hunger you get when you are not physically hungry. Often occurs when you

get home from work, 3-5pm or after dinner. If you are one to suffer from head hunger at this time, and had a lunch that was sufficient in protein, I bet you will realise you are not 'actually' hungry, rather you are tired from a long day at work or looking after the kids, you could also be bored or looking for a way to relax. None of these emotions are a good reason to snack as you will continue to feel these feelings throughout life and if you were to eat every time you felt tired, bored or needing to relax you would never be able to maintain weight loss. You have to find another way to deal with these emotions in a way that does not involve food.



Firstly **fix the physical** - as mentioned earlier, make sure that your meals are high in protein and low in carbs and are well spaced. Then we can look at the head. Keeping busy is a good idea, give yourself jobs to complete when you get home from work so that you do not have time to eat. Also think about getting the 'tempting' foods out of the house, these are different for everyone, some people can not resist home baking others its chippies/lollies or nuts etc. Regardless of what you may think - you do not actually need these types of foods in your environment - especially if you struggle to maintain your weight - you will have to get these foods out of your sight to get them out of your mind.

The best thing to put in your mouth at these times is a fluid such as water, berocca or a diet fizzy, these fluids can be great to relax. A diet ginger beer with ice in the middle of summer is great. Or you could have a nice hot drink, buy the Nescafe cappuccino skim drinks (these are NOT sweet) and enjoy one after a long day at work. Or be prepared and make up a WW jelly and have that ready for the afternoon head hunger time. The worst thing you can do is actually eat, as this is just allowing your brain to never change its habit, you need to 'rewire' your default switch to choose a fluid over the old snacky foods, this will take time, weeks/months to master but it can/needs to be done, your long term success will depend on it.

**'EatMe' competition:** This month I asked for some tips from those who have talked themselves out of tempting situations. What were their tricks in doing so?

**There were no entries this month, will carry this on to next month.**

You can get free protein powder samples from [www.eatme.net.nz](http://www.eatme.net.nz)



**Waikato/Bay of Plenty Support Group:** Waikato/Bay of Plenty Support Group November get together is on Sunday 13 November at Kava Bar, Cafe and Restaurant, 40 Seddon Street, Waihi from 2pm to 4pm. If you haven't attended our friendly group before and would like to liaise with someone prior to walking in to Kava please contact Barbara at [chickie\\_babe@ihug.co.nz](mailto:chickie_babe@ihug.co.nz) or call 021 139 3805 and she'll will sort something out for you. If you'd like to carpool with someone please also contact Barbara.