

MyHealthy Decisions

Life- improving surgery

“I was to the point I was so heavy, doing anything took my breath away,” recalls Kari Hackett. At that time, Hackett couldn’t get up from the floor while holding onto her sister’s baby. She remembers being out of breath while bent over changing the baby and thinking she was so unhealthy she might be gone before the baby got to know her. Hackett’s highest weight was 317. After gastric bypass surgery at Bassett Medical Center in 2015, at the age of 33, she lost 130 pounds and remains at her current weight of 187.

“I have my own support team, as a lot of my friends have undergone weight-loss surgeries,” says Hackett, who lives in Plymouth. “My husband loves the fact that I feel good, and he’s proud of me.

“I feel fantastic. This is the best thing I’ve ever done for myself. I would do it again in a heartbeat. I had high cholesterol and high blood pressure, was prediabetic and had joint pain. Now I don’t take medication for any of them.

“I can run around and play with my nieces and nephews, and I enjoy them. They like playing in the sprinklers, going swimming, riding bikes—all that stuff—and I do that with them now, where before I didn’t have the ability. And now, I can go pretty much just as long as they can.”



Bassett Healthcare
Network

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WEIGHT MANAGEMENT ISSUE



CHERYL IRVIN calls July 24, 2014, her re-birth date. “That’s the day I took my life back,” she says.

Irvin, who had been heavy all her life, managed to lose weight over the years but always gained it back. Then in 2012, her knee gave out while she was standing. She had other health issues associated with being overweight. She had high blood pressure and prediabetes. Being diagnosed with sleep apnea was the turning point for her as she didn’t want to begin using a breathing device.

“I’ve got to take charge of my life,” Irvin decided. Through Bassett

Healthcare Network’s weight-loss program, she had gastric sleeve surgery. “It’s the best thing I ever did,” she says.

Nearly a third of all U.S. adults ages 20 and older are overweight—just under 38 percent are obese and 7.7 percent are extremely obese. Weight-related conditions are on the rise, such as heart disease, stroke, diabetes, some cancers and osteoarthritis.

Managing weight is challenging, and the reasons for being overweight are complex. The nonsurgical options of exercising and eating

optimally, along with the guidance of a health care professional, should always be tried first to manage weight loss. But for people for whom nothing seems to work, weight-loss surgery can be an effective option.

“I wanted to be able to retire and enjoy my retirement,” says Irvin, of East Worcester. “I had considered weight-loss surgery many times before, but finally I said, ‘now’s the time to do it,’ and I jumped right into it with both feet.”

At 342 pounds, Irvin began Bassett’s weight-loss program. Stephanie Ocegüera, MD, performed gastric sleeve surgery, reducing Irvin’s stomach to the size of a banana. In total, Irvin lost 165 pounds—“half of myself,” she says.

“You’re getting a second chance,” she says. “You can move forward and do all the things you want to do. It’s a whole new life.”

Irvin has since become a certified Zumba instructor.

Time to take control

Weight-loss (bariatric) surgery may be a good option if:

- ▶ Repeated attempts with nonsurgical methods to control your weight have failed.
- ▶ You are motivated and have realistic expectations.
- ▶ Your BMI is greater than or equal to 40.

- ▶ Your BMI is greater than or equal to 35, and you have at least one obesity-related health condition.
- ▶ You know the risks and benefits.
- ▶ You can commit to adjustments in your lifestyle, such as regular exercise and changes in how and what you eat—to keep the weight off.

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Fantastic results

“WEIGHT-LOSS surgery has given me a whole new life—a whole new lease on life—because I’m able to physically do things with the kids that I wasn’t able to do before,” says Fort Plain resident Stephanie Paradiso. “I never, ever have been an athletic person, but I can run 5Ks and finish them in

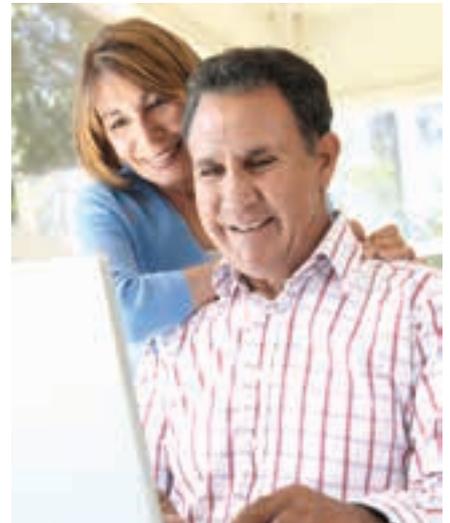
less than an hour, a huge accomplishment considering I started at almost 40 years old to run for the first time.”

In January 2014, Steven Heneghan, MD, performed gastric bypass surgery on Paradiso, and she has gone from a high of 287 pounds down to 133 pounds. At her six-month check, she was down 110 pounds. She has lost nearly 100 percent of her excess body weight.

One reason Bassett Healthcare Network’s surgical weight-loss program is successful for patients is the rigorous presurgery program. Patients learn about types of surgery, attend orientation sessions, receive a full medical assessment and review proper nutrition and exercise.

Tips from Stephanie

- ▶ “We’ve changed the way we shop. We have a lot more fruit in the house to snack on. Now if I or the kids want a snack, we go grab an apple or an orange. You have to completely change the way you think about food.”
- ▶ “You have to be ready to incorporate exercise.”
- ▶ “You have to want to do it for yourself. I feel better emotionally and physically, and I think I’ve become a better person through it all.”



We offer options

Gastric sleeve and **gastric banding** procedures shrink your stomach’s size. With gastric sleeve, 75 percent of your stomach is removed, leaving a banana-shaped stomach. After surgery, your stomach will only be able to hold about 2 to 3 ounces. A gastric sleeve procedure is not reversible.

Gastric banding involves placing a silicone band around the upper part of the stomach to decrease stomach size and reduce food intake. The band limits how much food can go into your stomach. The band can be adjusted or removed.

Roux-en-Y gastric bypass surgery reduces the size of your stomach to a small pouch, which is done by stapling off a section of it, reducing the amount of food you can take in. The pouch is then attached directly to the small intestine, bypassing the rest of the stomach and upper part of the small intestine.

Patients generally lose more weight more quickly, about 60 to 65 percent of their excess weight, but there’s also a risk of malnutrition and vitamin and mineral deficiencies.

Remember! Weight loss surgery should be considered a major life decision.



“I still want to be a kid with my kids,” says Stephanie Paradiso. Stephanie’s children are Anthony, center, and Sarah, right.



FIND OUT MORE ABOUT WEIGHT-LOSS SURGERY Bassett Medical Center’s surgical weight-loss program is an accredited center of the Metabolic and Bariatric Surgery Accreditation and Quality Improvement Program. For more information, visit bassett.org/weightloss or call 800-BASSETT (800-227-7388).



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See their stories

To access videos of Cheryl, Stephanie and Kari, go to bassett.org and click on "Read More" at the bottom of the page.



Is bariatric surgery right for you?

WEIGHT-LOSS surgery has become a popular topic as more people are sharing their stories. But how do you know if it's right for you?

"When I meet patients who are considering weight-loss surgery, I tell them that it's important that they are invested in making positive life changes," says Stephanie Oceguela, MD, attending surgeon at Bassett Medical Center. "It takes work, and patients must learn to use surgery as a tool to their advantage. It's about a mindset change: reading labels,

becoming more physically active and understanding that an operation is not the answer, but a very powerful aid."

Bassett Healthcare Network's surgeons, dietitians, counselors and other experts work together to help patients through their weight-loss journeys. They provide orientations, medical screenings, dietary counseling, physical therapy, mental health evaluations, preoperative education classes, support groups and help for adjusting to life after surgery.

"Patients often express that they

appreciate the rigor of our program and feel well-prepared by the time surgery occurs," Dr. Oceguela says. "Education regarding diet and exercise is critical. Surgery is only a part of a patient's weight-loss experience. Our goals are to also resolve related health conditions, like diabetes, high blood pressure, sleep apnea and reflux, among others."

Bassett's bariatric surgeons have completed specialized training and offer several techniques in surgery, leading to shorter recovery times, less pain and a quicker return to normal activities.

"It's a great joy for me as a surgeon to see people come back with a new bounce in their step and exuding more energy and positivity," Dr. Oceguela says. "It's wonderfully rewarding to be a part of patients' weight-loss journeys, witnessing them blossom and describe the things they can now do with their children and families that they couldn't do before. Life is precious, and everyone deserves a chance to live it to the fullest."



Stephanie Oceguela, MD



CALL TODAY. To learn more about Bassett Healthcare Network's weight-loss surgery program or attend a free seminar, visit bassett.org/weight-loss or call **607-547-3647**.