

ATgoal

Keys To Success After WLS

by **Terry Simpson, MD, FACS**

Successful patients know that the operation is the start of a lifestyle change. It is not the operation that causes a change in a person, although it does, and can—it is the operation that is the physical marker for change.

When prospective patients ask me about the statistics we have for the “operation,” I tell them that they are asking the wrong question. The question is never the statistics for an operation, because it isn’t the operation that is responsible for weight loss, it is the patient. I then tell them that the right question to ask is: “What are the factors to success for any weight loss operation?” Let’s start with the basics:

If you eat the same thing that you ate that lead to your excess weight, it won’t work. This means finding new foods, new places to eat, learning to cook, and learning to eat slowly and more deliberately. Eating less junk food will lead to some weight loss, but not as much as if you decide to eat in better places, or make better choices. Think about it—you deserve to eat somewhere besides where they serve you through a glass window. You deserve to eat somewhere besides in your car.

The operation will allow you to eat less and feel satisfied for hours. What you do not ever do, is have

your stomach tell you when you are done eating. This means you learn to measure food by volume and use that as your portion. If you eat until you feel full, you will eventually stretch things and that can lead to problems. For the RNY, it can lead to stretching the stoma and the upper pouch. For the sleeve, it will mean stretching the stomach out to where it will return to its normal size. For the LAP-BAND, it could lead to a slip or an erosion. With the band, we can let out fluid to correct the problem. With the surgeries, fixing the stretched may require surgery. But, the real issue is to lose weight and to do that, eat a portion and walk away.

Better food choices are the fun part of the lifestyle change. There are a lot of recipe books out there, there are great restaurants to try, and new recipes. This is a change—and food is the basics. So have fun, enjoy great food, try new things and remember, this isn’t a “diet”; it is a lifestyle. It means out with the old! It’s time to find some new friends—some new and healthier food.

Eating less, eating better, and eating well are the cornerstones to those who get to goal and stay there.

Dr. Simpson’s workbook *A Guidebook for Lap-Band Patients-Getting to Goal and Staying There: Lessons from Successful Patients* is now available at Amazon.com.

