The Bariatric Beat at Regional West

January 2024



Upcoming Events:

In-Person Support Group
Feb. 7, 2024
5:30 to 6:30 p.m.
Scotts Bluff Room I,
Regional West Medical Center

Relationship Goals: Making it Work After Surgery with guest speaker Mark Anderson, LMHP

In-Person Support Group
March 6, 2024
5:30 to 6:30 p.m.
Scotts Bluff Room I,
Regional West Medical Center

Greek Yogurt: From Yuck to Yum With a Few Tweaks

Special Announcements

Exciting news is on the horizon at Regional West as we announce updates to our renowned bariatric program. We're dedicated to providing excellent support for your transformative journey towards a healthier life.

Meet Our Bariatric Coordinator, Amber Schulze, FNP-C



We are delighted to introduce Amber Schulze, FNP-C, who joins us to help guide individuals on their bariatric journey. Amber provides medical weight management evaluation and support for patients, whether they choose surgical or non-surgical paths. Learning from the expertise of bariatric surgeons Jeffrey Holloway, MD, FACS, and Jason LaTowsky, MD, she brings commitment and compassion to our program. Amber is here to help you achieve success throughout every step of your bariatric journey. Welcome, Amber!

Introducing Our Wednesday Support Group

Embark on this exciting journey with our newly initiated support group meeting, scheduled the first Wednesday of every month. These sessions are designed to foster a sense of community, share experiences, and offer valuable insights. Join us as we build a supportive network to celebrate successes and navigate challenges together.

February Support Group Guest Speaker Mark Anderson, LMHP

Join us at our Feb. 7 support group meeting to meet Mark Anderson, LMHP, a licensed mental health practitioner in Scottsbluff who specializes in couples counseling. With a bachelor's degree in Psychology and a master's degree in marriage and family therapy, Mark is dedicated to enhancing relationships. Mark will be sharing insights to help strengthen your relationships. Don't miss this opportunity to gain valuable tools for healthier, happier connections.

Success stories will be coming soon!

Regional West
4021 Avenue B | Scottsbluff, NE 69361
308-630-3812 | RWHS.org

The Bariatric Beat at Regional West

Ask the Expert

As we enter the new year, it's a time for fresh starts and self-reflection. Jeffrey Holloway, MD, FACS highlights the importance of being mindful of "slippery calories" like gravy, dressings, creamers, alcohol, and soda – the hidden culprits that can sneak into our diets and contribute to weight gain.

Starting fresh often involves paying closer attention to our eating habits. Keeping a food diary to track protein, carbs, and calorie intake can help uncover hidden calories and kickstart your journey towards weight loss.

Remember, you're not alone on this path. Your health is our priority, and Dr. Holloway and our team are here to support you. If you have any questions or need guidance, feel free to reach out.

Wishing you a healthy and Happy New Year!
Amber Schulze, FNP-C

Dietitian's Corner: Meals and Tips for January

When the new year is here, we think of making goals, getting back on track, and losing the pounds we gained over the holidays. Being mindful about our choices can help us to stay on track all year long. Some tips to being mindful with food choices include:

- Don't keep trigger foods in the house – put those foods in a special cupboard so they are out of sight, out of mind, or buy one treat when you are outside your home
- Use smaller plates or bowls
- Chew your food well
- Make meals last 20 minutes
- Use the hunger scale to assess if you're hungry, eating from boredom, or emotional eating
- Sit only at the table to eat your meals and snacks



Health Tips

As the winter chill sets in, maintaining exercise motivation can be challenging, especially for bariatric patients. Embrace the season by exploring indoor activities like swimming or joining a fitness class. Alternatively, bundle up for a brisk outdoor walk, taking in the crisp air and invigorating scenery. Remember, consistency is key, and finding winter activities that bring joy can make staying active during colder months a rewarding part of your journey.



Creamy Cauliflower

- 1 lb. of cauliflower, chopped
- 2 cloves of garlic, peeled
- 4 triangles of "Laughing Cow" Cheese, any flavor
- Salt and pepper to taste

Cook cauliflower and garlic together with one to two inches of water on the stove or in the microwave until very tender. Drain. Add cheese and blend in a blender or food processor until smooth. Season with salt and pepper. You may need to reheat before serving. This recipe makes four servings, with three grams of protein, four grams of carbohydrates, and four grams of fat per serving.

Chicken Parm Mini Meatloaves

- 1 lb. ground chicken, preferably from the breast
- 1 egg
- ¾ cup reduced fat grated parmesan cheese
- 2 garlic cloves, minced
- ½ small onion, grated
- ¾ teaspoon of basil, thyme, and oregano
- ¾ teaspoon salt
- ½ teaspoon black pepper
- ½ cup marinara sauce (if you are using store bought, look for one with the lowest added sugar)
- ½ cup part skim shredded mozzarella cheese



Preheat oven to 350 degrees. Spray a muffin tin with nonstick spray. Combine ground chicken with egg, seasonings, parmesan cheese, garlic, and onion. Mix to combine. Divide meat evenly among muffin tin to make 12 mini loaves. Top each loaf with two teaspoons of marinara sauce. Bake for 20 minutes or until an instant read thermometer reaches 165 degrees. Remove from the oven and sprinkle with mozzarella cheese. Return the pan to the oven until cheese melts. This recipe makes six servings (one serving is two meatloves), with 19 grams of protein, seven grams of carbohydrates, nine grams of fat, and 201 calories per serving.

The Bariatric Beat at Regional West

February 2024



Special Announcements

Education Seminar

Did you know? You can discover all you need to know about stapling bariatric procedures on the Bariatrics & Weight Loss Surgery webpage. Dive into our free education seminar for a comprehensive understanding of benefits, potential risks, and the overall process. Click here to go to the webpage, or scan the QR code at the bottom of this page.

Empower yourself to make informed decisions for a healthier life!



Success Story

Join us in celebrating Yesenia's incredible success! Her 100 lb. weight loss journey with bariatric surgery is a testament to the transformative power of embracing a healthier lifestyle. We're here to support you on your own journey.

Explore the benefits of bariatric surgery and take the first step toward a positive change. Contact us for more information, or to schedule a consultation. Your journey to wellness begins here!

Congratulations, Yesenia!

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In-Person Support Group
March 6, 2024
5:30 to 6:30 p.m.
Regional West Medical Plaza South, Conference Room 1

Greek Yogurt: From Yuck to Yum With a Few Tweaks

Dr. Holloway
Lap Band Presentation and Appointment
March 13, 2024
Surgery, Vascular Diagnostics
Please call 308-632-2872 to make an appointment.

In-Person Support Group
April 3, 2024
5:30 to 6:30 p.m.
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Let's Get This Party Started: Social Settings After Surgery

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Regional West
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The Bariatric Beat at Regional West

Ask the Expert

Is there a best weight loss option?

While the sleeve gastrectomy is the most popular weight loss surgery, it may worsen reflux or heartburn. Someone with severe reflux would be better served with a lap band or gastric bypass.

The Roux en Y gastric bypass is the best anti-reflux operation and is suited for severe reflux disease. The new stomach is sensitive to gastric irritants like tobacco, NSAIDs, or steroid medications.

The lap band is also an anti-reflux operation. The band offers a greater safety profile and is also reversible. The lap band does not require specialized vitamin supplements because absorption is not affected by the surgery.

Each operation has strengths and weaknesses. Choosing the right surgery for each individual is important for the best possible outcome.

Jason LaTowsky, MD



Health Tips

Weight loss is not just a physical transformation; it's a journey that significantly impacts mental health. While successful weight loss often brings positive psychosocial changes, it's crucial to acknowledge the potential challenges. Some may face a return of pre-existing mental health issues or encounter new ones, especially during weight regain. As providers, we emphasize the continuous assessment of well-being throughout the whole process. Our commitment is unwavering; we are here to support patients in every aspect during their weight loss journey. Together, let's practice a holistic approach to well-being.

Dietitian's Corner: Loving Yourself

by Karen Johnson, RD, CSO, LMNT, and Lori Miller, RD, CDCES, LMNT

February is the month of love and relationships, but it can be frustrating when we hit plateaus in our weight loss journey. Even when you feel discouraged, love yourself enough to not quit.

There are many measures of progress besides the scale. How are you sleeping? How are your clothes fitting? Can you walk up the stairs without shortness of breath, or is it easier than it was a month ago? How are you managing your stress? What is your strength like compared to a month ago? Love yourself enough to not quit; you are making progress!

When it's cold out, I like to make sheet pan meals for a fast, healthy dinner with fewer dishes to wash! It is recommended that we eat fish two times per week. Try this tasty recipe for a dish your whole family can enjoy. You can also experiment with other meats, seasonings, and vegetables.

Sheet Pan Salmon with Sweet Potatoes and Broccoli

- 3 tbsp. reduced calorie mayonnaise
- 1 tsp. chili powder
- 1-2 limes; make 2 tsp. zest and 2 tsp. of juice, with remaining lime to wedge
- 2 medium sweet potatoes, peeled and cubed
- 4 tsp. olive oil, divided
- 1 tsp. salt, divided
- 1/2 tsp. ground pepper, divided
- 4 cups broccoli florets (approx. 8 oz. or 1 medium crown)
- 4 (5 oz.) salmon filets
- 1/4 cup grated parmesan or cotija cheese (optional)
- 1/2 cup chopped fresh cilantro (optional)



Preheat oven to 425 degrees. Line a large rimmed baking sheet with foil and lightly coat with cooking spray. Combine mayonnaise, chili powder, lime zest, and lime juice in a bowl. Set aside. Toss sweet potatoes with 2 tsp. olive oil, 1/2 tsp. salt, and 1/4 tsp. pepper in a medium bowl. Spread on the prepared baking sheet and roast for 15 minutes. Toss broccoli with the remaining 2 tsp. olive oil, 1/2 tsp. salt, and 1/4 tsp. pepper in the same bowl. Remove the pan with sweet potatoes from the oven, stir, and push them to one side. Add broccoli to the other side and return to oven for 15 minutes. Spread mayo mixture evenly over salmon filets. Pull vegetables out of the oven, stir, and move them to the side. Arrange salmon in the center of the pan, return to oven, and bake until the sweet potatoes are tender and the salmon reaches an internal temperature of 145 degrees. Top fish with cilantro and cheese if desired; serve with lime wedges on the side.

The Bariatric Beat at Regional West

March 2024



Special Announcements

Q&A Survey

Your voice matters in Regional West Bariatric & Weight Loss Surgery's program! We're in the process of enhancing our services so we can better cater to your needs. Whether you're considering weight loss options, are a past patient, or are someone who is simply curious about what we offer, we want to hear from you.

We invite you to fill out our Q&A survey so we can hear your questions, concerns, and feedback. Together, we'll continue to strive for safe, efficient, and high-quality healthcare that's tailored to you.

SCAN ME

Thank you for joining us on our mission to build a robust weight loss community.

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Extreme Makeover: Pantry Edition

Sharing Success Stories

Regional West's Bariatric & Weight Loss Surgery program is proud be a part of your weight loss journey. Your decision to prioritize your well-being and embark on a transformative journey is admirable, and we are here for milestones big and small.

That being said, we want to celebrate YOU! We invite you to share your success story with us. Your achievements deserve recognition, and your journey serves as motivation for others. If you're willing to tell us your story, email Amber.Schulze@rwhs.org.

Here's to many more victories and a lifetime of better health!

Regional West
4021 Avenue B | Scottsbluff, NE 69361
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The Bariatric Beat at Regional West

Ask the Expert

Are you considering bariatric surgery?

If your BMI is greater than 35 and you're experiencing co-morbidities like diabetes, hypertension, hyperlipidemia, sleep apnea, or joint pain, you may be a candidate.

Our mission is to provide you with comprehensive information on surgical options. Research shows that bariatric surgery may effectively reverse diabetes and heart disease; lower blood pressure; and alleviate various other health issues. Moreover, national insurance companies like Medicare offer coverage for weight loss surgery.

We aim to efficiently guide you through the process. From navigating options to helping with insurance requirements, our team is here to support you every step of the way.

Take the first step toward a healthier future. Contact us today to learn more about your options.

Bariatric Coordinator Amber Schulze, FNP-C



Health Tips

Navigating the journey to a positive body image can be challening, but know that you're not alone. Remember to stop comparing yourself to others, practice positive affirmations, embrace your body, surround yourself with positivity, and be kind to yourself. Your worth isn't defined by your appearance.

Dietitian's Corner: Focusing on Nutrition

by Karen Johnson, RD, CSO, LMNT, and Lori Miller, RD, CDCES, LMNT

March is National Nutrition Month, a time to emphasize making informed food choices and encourage developing sound eating and exercise habits. Take a moment to check out the list below and see if there are a couple items you can focus on this month.

1. As a family, try a new fruit or vegetable each week.
2. Give family members a role in meal planning and let them pick out recipes to try.
3. Plan to eat more meals together.
4. If you watch TV, take breaks during commercials to be physically active.
5. Practice mindful eating by limiting screen time at meals - including phones, computers, and TV.
6. Try more meatless meals. Choices like beans and lentils are versatile plant-based protein sources that work in many dishes.

Air Fryer Avocado Black Bean Taquitos

- 1 ripe, fresh avocado, halved, pitted, peeled, and mashed
- 1/2 cup canned black beans, rinsed
- 1/2 tbsp. cumin
- 1 tsp. garlic powder
- 1/2 tsp. salt
- 10 six-inch corn tortillas



For the salsa:

- 1 cup cherry tomatoes, chopped
- 1/2 cup red or yellow bell peppers, seeded and diced
- 1 tbsp. fresh jalapeno, minced
- 1 tbsp. onion, minced
- 1 tbsp. fresh lime juice
- 2 tbsp. fresh cilantro leaves, chopped
- 4 oz. plain Greek yogurt
- Salt and pepper to taste

Using a fork, mash the avocado and black beans together in a bowl. Stir in cumin, garlic powder, and salt. Spread approximately two tablespoons of the avocado onto a corn tortilla, dividing evenly between 10 tortillas. Roll tightly to form 10 taquitos. Place taquitos into an air fryer that's been preheated to 400 degrees. Set the cooking time for five minutes. Turn taquitos over and air fry for five more minutes. Depending on the air fryer, you may need to adjust cooking time. While taquitos are cooking, combine the salsa ingredients to make fresh salsa. Remove taquitos from the air fryer when they are golden brown and crispy. Serve with salsa and plain Greek yogurt if desired. One serving is two taquitos and contains eight grams of unsaturated fat, nine grams of dietary fiber, 16 grams of protein, and 35 grams of carbohydrates.

The Bariatric Beat at Regional West

April 2024



Special Announcements

Spring is a lovely reminder of how truly beautiful change can be.

Introducing Our Wednesday Support Group

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Education Seminar

Watch our free online seminar about bariatric stapling procedures and learn more about the process. To watch the seminar, go to: ***rwhs.org/bariatrics-online-seminar***.

Q&A Survey

Your voice matters in Regional West Bariatric & Weight Loss Surgery's program! We're in the process of enhancing our services so we can better cater to your needs. Whether you're considering weight loss options, are a past patient, or are someone who is simply curious about what we offer, we want to hear from you. We invite you to fill out our Q&A survey so we can hear your questions, concerns, and feedback. Thank you for joining us on our mission to build a robust weight loss program.

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April 3, 2024
5:30 to 6:30 p.m.
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Extreme Makeover: Pantry Edition

Dr. Holloway Lap Band Presentation and Appointments
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SCAN ME

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The Bariatric Beat at Regional West

Ask the Expert

Are vitamin supplements necessary after weight loss surgery?

Yes! With all weight loss surgeries, total food intake is decreased, and vitamins are recommended to supplement a healthy diet. With the lap band surgery, a general multivitamin is adequate.

With other weight loss surgeries, the stomach is reduced in size or partially bypassed. The stomach helps break down nutrients for absorption. This can help you lose weight, but certain vitamins are also broken down by the stomach for absorption. After surgery, some vitamins will need to be replaced in higher than normal amounts to help keep you healthy. Taking more than recommended doses of regular vitamins can cause damage.

There are specific vitamins made for the type of weight loss surgery that you have had. While it is true that you can take a regular multivitamin and add specific supplements, many companies are now offering vitamins that are specifically made for your new body.

Major companies for bariatric vitamins include brands such as Celebrate, Fusion, Bariatric Advantage, and Procare. The list of high quality products continues to grow. Vitamins are available without a prescription and can easily be found online. There are also many forms of vitamins from pills and chewable, to injections, liquids, nasal sprays, or topical vitamin patches. Patches offer simplicity as a once-daily application and are offered by Patch MD and PatchAid.

The goal of weight loss surgery is to make you healthier and to no longer need many of your home medications. Please be aware that with all surgeries and many diet plans, supplemental vitamins are necessary.

Jason Latowsky, MD



Health Tips

Celebrating progress, no matter how small, is pivotal in maintaining enthusiasm and motivation throughout your weight loss journey. Rapid weight loss isn't always the healthiest or most sustainable approach. Focus on acknowledging small victories, such as adhering to your workout plan for a week or reducing unhealthy snacking habits. Meaningful progress can fuel your determination toward achieving your long-term goals.

Dietitian's Corner: Focusing on Nutrition

by Karen Johnson, RD, CSO, LMNT, and Lori Miller, RD, CDCES, LMNT

It's spring and we are all looking for ways to save time in the kitchen. Check out this delicious overnight oats recipe.

Overnight Oats

Provides: 190 calories, 12 g protein, 4 g fiber, 30 g carbohydrate, 2 g fat before add-ins

- ½ cup steel cut oats
- ½ cup Greek yogurt or Fairlife milk
- Combine oats and yogurt or milk in small bowl or jar. Cover and refrigerate overnight.
- Feel free to add fresh fruit like berries, toasted nuts, chia seeds, and/or cinnamon or vanilla for additional flavoring.



The Bariatric Beat at Regional West

May 2024



Ramona Gonzalis



Brenda Bishop



Bianca Reynolds

Special Announcements

Celebrate every victory, big or small, as you navigate your bariatric journey.

Introducing Our Wednesday Support Group

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Education Seminar

Dive into our free education seminar for a comprehensive understanding of benefits, potential risks, and the overall process. To watch the seminar, go to rwhs.org/bariatrics-online-seminar or scan the QR code at the bottom of the page.

Success Stories

Congratulations to Brenda Bishop, Bianca Reynolds, and Ramona Gonzalis on losing 100 pounds! Your dedication and hard work have paid off, and your success is nothing short of amazing. We're honored to have been a part of your journey and witness your transformation. If you're looking to embark on your own loss journey, or are seeking support, reach out to us. We're here to answer your questions and provide the guidance you need to achieve your health goals. Keep up the fantastic work!

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Extreme Makeover: Pantry Edition

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Are You Getting Enough Vitamin D?

Dr. Holloway Lap Band Presentation and Appointments
June 12, 2024
Surgery, Vascular Diagnostics
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SCAN ME

Regional West

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The Bariatric Beat at Regional West

Ask the Expert

Is weight loss surgery a 'cop-out'? To lose weight, should people with obesity just go on a diet and exercise?

Weight loss surgery is not a 'cop-out' for those struggling with obesity. Rather, it's a medically proven solution for a complex problem. Despite sincere efforts with diet and exercise, many individuals find it incredibly challenging to shed excess weight and maintain the loss over time. The National Institutes of Health (NIH) Expert Panel confirms that severe obesity often necessitates surgical intervention for sustainable results. Unlike traditional weight loss methods, which can trigger hormonal responses that increase hunger and decrease calorie burn, bariatric procedures offer tangible physiological changes. By reducing stomach size and altering gut hormones, these surgeries effectively curb appetite, enhance satiety, and limit food absorption. Consequently, patients experience significant and enduring weight loss, addressing the underlying factors contributing to obesity. Rather than viewing surgery as a shortcut, it's crucial to recognize it as a viable option supported by scientific evidence, offering hope and transformative outcomes for those battling obesity.

Amber Schulze, MSN, APRN, FNP-C, Bariatric Coordinator



Health Tips

In the quest for weight loss, simplistic solutions fall short. Self-monitoring, however, offers a nuanced approach. By tracking food intake, exercise, and lifestyle choices, individuals gain insight and accountability. At Regional West, we recognize the power of self-awareness in fostering lasting change. Through self-monitoring, patients can tailor strategies to their unique needs, paving the way for sustained success on their weight loss journey.

Dietitian's Corner: Focusing on Nutrition

by Karen Johnson, RD, CSO, LMNT, and Lori Miller, RD, CDCES, LMNT

Most social events involve food, and they do not always include healthy, low calorie options. Remember to ask yourself, "is it worth it?" when you are choosing your foods. When you're looking for snack ideas, think of your food groups to make your snacks nutrient dense. Do they have whole grains, fruit, low-fat dairy, lean protein, or vegetables in them?

Check out this healthy twist on a classic sweet treat. You can substitute the yogurts for different flavors and try other fruits such as blueberries and bananas.

Strawberry S'mores

- 2 strawberries
- 1 graham cracker (broken in half)
- 1/8 cup (or 2 tbsp.) low-fat vanilla yogurt

Wash your hands with soap and water, then rinse the strawberries in water and slice them. Add the yogurt and strawberries to half of the graham cracker. Top with the other half of the graham cracker. Enjoy!



The Bariatric Beat at Regional West

June 2024



Special Announcements

Losing weight is hard. Maintaining weight is hard. Staying overweight is hard. Choose your hard.

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Eating Healthy While Eating Out

Dr. Holloway Lap Band Presentation and Appointments
July 10, 2024
Surgery, Vascular Diagnostics
Please call 308-632-2872 to make an appointment.



Success Stories

Incredible news! Karrie has achieved an astonishing 100 lb. weight loss in just six months with the gastric sleeve procedure! Kudos to Karrie for her dedication and determination, and special thanks to bariatric surgeon Dr. LaTowsky. Karrie's success story is beacon of hope and inspiration for all on the journey to better health. Congratulations, Karrie!

SCAN ME

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The Bariatric Beat at Regional West

Ask the Expert

Is Obesity a Disease?

The recognition of obesity as a disease by the American Medical Association (AMA) in 2013 marked a significant turning point in reshaping societal perceptions and healthcare approaches to this widespread health concern. Previously, obesity was often oversimplified and stigmatized as solely stemming from overeating and lack of physical activity. However, this narrow viewpoint failed to acknowledge the intricate roles of genetic, environmental, and socioeconomic factors. Acknowledging that these factors contribute to obesity is crucial for fostering greater understanding and dispelling misconceptions.



Health Tips

Healthy, supervised weight loss programs can help achieve faster weight loss. Finding sustainable lifestyle changes is key for long-term results. Consulting with your physician or provider to develop a healthy weight loss plan is recommended for safety and efficacy.

Extensive research linking obesity to 236 other diseases underscores the pressing need for comprehensive interventions that address the root of obesity. The United States Preventive Services Task Force (USPSTF) recommends universal screening for obesity in adults and referral to intensive, multi-component behavioral intervention programs for those at risk. This highlights the importance of early detection and comprehensive support in managing obesity as chronic condition.

Discover a tailored approach to weight loss with Regional West's bariatric program. Let us support and guide you on your journey towards a healthier, happier you.

Warmest regards,
Amber Schulze, MSN, APRN, FNP-C, Bariatric Coordinator

Dietitian's Corner: Focusing on Nutrition

by Karen Johnson, RD, CSO, LMNT, and Lori Miller, RD, CDCES, LMNT

Have you heard of the Mediterranean diet? It's not a fad diet; it's a lifestyle that can help you lose weight gradually and promote healthy eating habits for the long haul. This diet is all about enjoying delicious and nutritious fruits, veggies, whole grains, nuts, olive oil, fish, and low-fat dairy. Plus, you can add some zing to your meals with herbs and spices instead of salt. Just remember to skip the fried foods and limit your intake of red meat.

Caprese Bites

- 8 oz. mozzarella balls
- 2 tbsp. extra virgin olive oil
- 1 tsp. Italian seasoning
- ¼ tsp. crushed red pepper flakes
- 1 tsp. kosher salt (optional)
- 24 cherry tomatoes
- 12 fresh basil leaves
- Store bought balsamic glaze
- Wooden skewers

In a small bowl, stir together olive oil, Italian seasoning, crushed red pepper flakes, and salt. Add cheese and stir to coat. Layer a cherry tomato, basil leaf, marinated mozzarella ball, and another cherry tomato. Place on a serving plate. Drizzle skewers with balsamic glaze and serve.

Want to make your own balsamic glaze?
It's easy. Simmer one cup of balsamic vinegar on stove top until thick and syrupy - usually no more than 15 minutes. Set aside to cool and thicken.



The Bariatric Beat at Regional West

July 2024



Special Announcements

Physical activity helps fight insulin resistance and support weight loss.

Introducing Our Wednesday Support Group

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Education Seminar

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Eating Healthy While Eating Out

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In-Person Support Group
Aug. 7, 2024
5:30 to 6:30 p.m.
Regional West Medical Plaza South, Conference Room 1

It's Time to Plan Your Menu

Dr. Holloway Lap Band Presentation and Appointments
Aug. 14, 2024
Surgery, Vascular Diagnostics
Please call 308-632-2872 to make an appointment.





Success Stories

We're proud to celebrate Lana Lewis and Amanda Chancellor on their incredible weight loss! These ladies are down 100 lbs. and counting through lap band surgery and gastric bypass, respectively. We are thrilled to be part of their amazing journeys!

SCAN ME

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The Bariatric Beat at Regional West

Ask the Expert

Can Ozempic cause lean muscle weight loss?

You may be curious about the potential impact of Ozempic, a glucagon-like peptide-1 (GLP-1) agonist medication, on lean muscle weight loss. Ozempic is recognized for its effectiveness in promoting weight loss. Weight loss achieved through a calorie-reduced diet typically results in both fat and lean body mass reduction. Research indicates that in a 72-week trial involving GLP-1 agonists, approximately 25% of the weight loss by participants consisted of lean muscle mass. Despite this, participants generally achieved an overall improvement in body composition, reflecting a healthier balance between fat and lean tissue.



Health Tips

Hydration is key for weight loss success. Every cell in your body needs water to function optimally. Stay hydrated with water, herbal tea, or broth to reduce headaches, control hunger, and boost energy. Recognize your body's signals; often, thirst masquerades as hunger. Minimize unnecessary snacking and support your goals.

It's important to note that lean muscle loss can occur not only with GLP-1 agonists like Ozempic but also with other forms of weight loss, including dieting and certain weight loss pills. When calorie intake is reduced, the body often breaks down both fat and lean tissue for energy, unless measures are taken to specifically preserve lean muscle through adequate protein intake and resistance training exercises.

Preserving lean muscle mass is crucial as it plays a vital role in maintaining strength, metabolic rate, and overall physical function. Therefore, alongside weight loss efforts, it's important to focus on strategies that support muscle health. A fitness trainer and a registered dietitian can provide personalized guidance to help you achieve your weight loss goals while minimizing lean muscle loss.

Warmest regards,
Amber Schulze, MSN, APRN, FNP-C, Bariatric Coordinator

Dietitian's Corner: Focusing on Nutrition

by Karen Johnson, RD, CSO, LMNT, and Lori Miller, RD, CDCES, LMNT

Did you know that grilling is a delicious and healthy way to bring out the flavor of fruit? Popular grilling fruits include bananas, watermelon, peaches, nectarines, apples, pears, pineapple, and mangos. If you'd like to try grilling fruits, here are a few helpful tips:

- Use fruit that is a little less ripe than you would normally eat. It is important that raw fruit is slightly firm, so it holds up on the grill.
- Cut fruit into large chunks. If you are grilling bananas, you can keep them in the peel to protect their soft texture.
- Fruit can be lightly brushed with a neutral tasting vegetable oil. This helps to prevent sticking to the grates.
- Grill over high heat for three minutes without moving or turning to get grill marks. Flip and cook for one to three minutes more.

Looking to infuse more produce into your day? This quick after-school snack can give you a boost of Vitamin C, A, and fiber!

Avocado Mango Salsa

- 1 ripe mango, peeled and diced
- 5 ounces diced avocado from 1 medium
- 1 plum tomato, diced
- 1 clove garlic, minced
- 1 jalapeno, seeded and diced
- ¼ cup chopped fresh cilantro
- 2 tablespoons fresh lime juice
- ¼ cup chopped red onion
- ½ tablespoon olive oil
- Kosher salt and fresh pepper to taste

Combine all the ingredients and let them marinate in the refrigerator for 30 minutes before serving. Serve with whole grain chips, pretzels, or apple slices.



The Bariatric Beat at Regional West

July 2024



Special Announcements

Physical activity helps fight insulin resistance and support weight loss.

Introducing Our Wednesday Support Group

Embark on this exciting journey with our support group meeting, held on the first Wednesday of every month. Join us as we build a supportive network to celebrate successes and navigate challenges together.

Education Seminar

Dive into our free education seminar for a comprehensive understanding of benefits, potential risks, and the overall process. Scan the QR code at the bottom of the page or visit RWMCWeightLossOptions.com to register. Empower yourself to make informed decisions for a healthier life!

Upcoming Events:

In-Person Support Group
July 3, 2024
5:30 to 6:30 p.m.
Regional West Medical Plaza South, Conference Room 1

Eating Healthy While Eating Out

Dr. Holloway Lap Band Presentation and Appointments
July 10, 2024
Surgery, Vascular Diagnostics
Please call 308-632-2872 to make an appointment.

In-Person Support Group
Aug. 7, 2024
5:30 to 6:30 p.m.
Regional West Medical Plaza South, Conference Room 1

It's Time to Plan Your Menu

Dr. Holloway Lap Band Presentation and Appointments
Aug. 14, 2024
Surgery, Vascular Diagnostics
Please call 308-632-2872 to make an appointment.





Success Stories

We're proud to celebrate Lana Lewis and Amanda Chancellor on their incredible weight loss! These ladies are down 100 lbs. and counting through lap band surgery and gastric bypass, respectively. We are thrilled to be part of their amazing journeys!

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The Bariatric Beat at Regional West

Ask the Expert

Can Ozempic cause lean muscle weight loss?

You may be curious about the potential impact of Ozempic, a glucagon-like peptide-1 (GLP-1) agonist medication, on lean muscle weight loss. Ozempic is recognized for its effectiveness in promoting weight loss. Weight loss achieved through a calorie-reduced diet typically results in both fat and lean body mass reduction. Research indicates that in a 72-week trial involving GLP-1 agonists, approximately 25% of the weight loss by participants consisted of lean muscle mass. Despite this, participants generally achieved an overall improvement in body composition, reflecting a healthier balance between fat and lean tissue.



Health Tips

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- 1 plum tomato, diced
- 1 clove garlic, minced
- 1 jalapeno, seeded and diced
- ¼ cup chopped fresh cilantro
- 2 tablespoons fresh lime juice
- ¼ cup chopped red onion
- ½ tablespoon olive oil
- Kosher salt and fresh pepper to taste

Combine all the ingredients and let them marinate in the refrigerator for 30 minutes before serving. Serve with whole grain chips, pretzels, or apple slices.



The Bariatric Beat at Regional West

August 2024



Special Announcements

“Nothing can dim the light that shines from within.” - Maya Angelou

Introducing Our Wednesday Support Group

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Upcoming Events:

In-Person Support Group
Aug. 7, 2024
5:30 to 6:30 p.m.
Regional West Medical Center, Scotts Bluff II Room

It’s Time to Plan Your Menu

Dr. Holloway Lap Band Presentation and Appointments
Aug. 14, 2024
Surgery, Vascular Diagnostics
Please call 308-632-2872 to make an appointment.

In-Person Support Group
Sept. 4, 2024
5:30 to 6:30 p.m.
Regional West Medical Center, Scotts Bluff II Room

Your Fitness Journey

Dr. Holloway Lap Band Presentation and Appointments
Sept. 18, 2024
Surgery, Vascular Diagnostics
Please call 308-632-2872 to make an appointment.



Success Stories

Congratulations to Yvonne Millwood for her incredible success after gastric sleeve surgery! Yvonne has put in the hard work and lost 100 lbs. and counting. We are amazed by her and are thrilled to be on this journey with her! Yvonne, thank you for putting your trust in Regional West’s Bariatric and Weight Loss Surgery prgram. We are proud to celebrate you!

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The Bariatric Beat at Regional West

Ask the Expert

Which Behavioral Interventions Best Promote Weight Loss?

Successful long-term weight control requires sustained behavioral changes, as short term medicinal and dietary interventions alone are often insufficient. Self-monitoring and goal setting are particularly effective. Statistically, in 43% of studies within 17 reviews self-monitoring demonstrated significant weight loss compared to control groups. Self-monitoring through a mobile app resulted in a mean weight loss of 1.78 kg (3.92 pounds), while digital self-monitoring via web or mobile apps lead to a pooled weight loss of 2.87 kg (6.31 pounds) compared to control groups. Goal setting, which is often used in combination with other techniques such as self-monitoring, showed significant success. One reviewreported a weight loss of up to 4.9 kg (10.78 pounds) when these methodswere combined. These findings highlight the importance of integrating self-monitoring and goal setting into weight loss programs to achieve and maintain meaningful long-term results.

Warmest regards,
Amber Schulze, MSN, APRN, FNP-C, Bariatric Coordinator



Health Tips

Creating a daily walking routine offers numerous benefits, including better heart health, stronger muscles and bones, improved immunity, better sleep, a sharper mind, and more energy. Walk in the morning to invigorate and set a positive tone for the day, or in the evening to unwind. Make walking enjoyable by listening to music or podcasts, walking with a friend, exploring new routes, and setting achievable goals. Embrace walking as a simple yet powerful way to enhance your wellbeing.

Dietitian's Corner: Focusing on Nutrition

by Karen Johnson, RD, CSO, LMNT, and Lori Miller, RD, CDCES, LMNT

Grilled Lemon Herb Chicken



This recipe features tender chicken breasts marinated in a zesty lemon herb mixture.

- 4 boneless, skinless chicken breasts
- 1/4 cup olive oil
- Juice of 2 lemons
- 3 cloves garlic, minced
- 2 tablespoons fresh rosemary, chopped
- 2 tablespoons fresh thyme, chopped
- Salt and pepper to taste

In a bowl, whisk together the olive oil, lemon juice, garlic, rosemary, thyme, salt and pepper. Place the chicken breasts in a resealable bag and pour the marinade over them. Seal the bag and refrigerate for at least 30 minutes, preferably two to four hours. Preheat the grill to medium-high heat. Remove the chicken from the marinade and grill for six to seven minutes per side, or until the internal temperature reaches 165°F. Let the chicken rest for a few minutes before serving.

Grilled Veggie Skewers

These colorful veggie skewers are a perfect side dish or main course for a vegetarian BBQ.

- 1 red bell pepper, cut into chunks
- 1 yellow bell pepper, cut into chunks
- 1 zucchini, sliced
- 1 red onion, cut into chunks
- 1 cup cherry tomatoes
- 2 tablespoons olive oil
- 2 tablespoons balsamic vinegar
- 1 teaspoon dried oregano
- Salt and pepper to taste

In a large bowl, toss the vegetables with olive oil, balsamic vinegar, oregano, salt, and pepper. Thread the vegetables onto skewers, alternating types for a colorful presentation. Preheat the grill to medium heat. Grill the skewers for 10-12 minutes, turning occasionally, until the vegetables are tender and slightly charred

The Bariatric Beat at Regional West

September 2024



Special Announcements

Introducing Our Wednesday Support Group

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Education Seminar

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Success Stories

We're proud to celebrate Jolene Jones, a new member of Regional West Bariatric and Weight Loss Surgery program's 100 lbs. down club. Since her gastric sleeve surgery, Jolene is down 100 lbs. and counting, and we are so proud of her progress. Congratulations on this amazing milestone, Jolene! Thank you for choosing us to be your partner on your weight loss journey.

Upcoming Events:

In-Person Support Group
Sept. 4, 2024
5:30 to 6:30 p.m.
Regional West Medical Center, Scotts Bluff II Room

Your Fitness Journey

Dr. Holloway Lap Band Presentation and Appointments
Sept. 11, 2024
Surgery, Vascular Diagnostics
Please call 308-632-2872 to make an appointment.

In-Person Support Group
Oct. 2, 2024
5:30 to 6:30 p.m.
Regional West Medical Center, Scotts Bluff II Room

"Helping" Your Kids with Their Weight

Dr. Holloway Lap Band Presentation and Appointments
Oct. 9, 2024
Surgery, Vascular Diagnostics
Please call 308-632-2872 to make an appointment.

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The Bariatric Beat at Regional West

Ask the Expert

Does Obesity Affect the Immune System?

The immune system is a vital defense network in our body, consisting of cells, tissues, and organs that work together to combat infections and diseases. When harmful microorganisms such as bacteria or viruses invade, the immune system responds by identifying and eliminating these threats. Without this intricate system, our bodies would be defenseless against both external pathogens and internal changes, such as cancerous cells.

Obesity, however, can significantly impair function. Excess weight leads to chronic inflammation, which overburdens the immune system and causes it to overreact even in the absence of infection. This prolonged state of inflammation is linked to various health issues, including diabetes, heart disease, and cancer. Moreover, obesity disrupts key immune components, such as memory cells and B-cells, weakening the body's ability to fight infections.

Maintaining a healthy weight is crucial for optimal immune function. Consulting with a healthcare provider about weight management can be an important step towards enhancing your immune health.

Warmest regards,
Amber Schulze, MSN, APRN, FNP-C, Bariatric Coordinator



Health Tips

Reading Nutrition Labels

Reading food labels is essential for making healthier choices. By examining labels, you can quickly assess the fat, sugar, and carbohydrate content of foods to make sure they align with your dietary goals. Pay special attention to the first three to five ingredients, as they are listed in order of quantity. This helps you understand what's most prevalent in the product. Being mindful of labels not only simplifies grocery shopping but also promotes better nutrition for you and your family.

Dietitian's Corner: Focusing on Nutrition

by Karen Johnson, RD, CSO, LMNT, and Lori Miller, RD, CDCES, LMNT



Frozen Yogurt Bark

- 2 cups plain Greek yogurt
- 2 tablespoons honey
- ½ teaspoon vanilla extract
- ¼ cup sliced strawberries
- ¼ cup blueberries
- ¼ cup raspberries
- ¼ cup granola

Mix the Greek yogurt with honey and vanilla extract until well combined. Spread the mixture evenly on a baking sheet lined with parchment paper. Sprinkle the sliced strawberries, blueberries, raspberries, and granola over the yogurt. Freeze for at least four hours or until firm. Break into pieces and enjoy.

Smoothie Bowls

- 1 cup frozen mixed berries
- 1 frozen banana
- ½ milk, dairy or non-dairy
- Toppings: sliced bananas and other fruits, nuts, pumpkin or sunflower seeds, coconut flakes, nut or seed butters, granola, etc.

Blend the frozen berries, banana, and milk until smooth. Pour into a bowl and let everyone customize their own smoothie bowl with their favorite toppings.

The Bariatric Beat at Regional West

October 2024



Special Announcements

Introducing Our Wednesday Support Group

Embark on this exciting journey with our newly initiated support group meeting, held on the first Wednesday of every month. Join us as we build a supportive network to celebrate successes and navigate challenges together.

Education Seminar

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Success Stories

Join us in giving a huge round of applause to Kameron Hahn! Kameron is down an incredible 100 lbs. and counting with medical weight management. Kameron, we are so proud of the effort and tenacity you've shown on your weight loss journey. Thank you for allowing us to be there every step of the way!

If you'd like to join Kameron on the path to weight loss, visit RWMCWeightLossOptions.com or call 308-632-2872.

Upcoming Events:

In-Person Support Group
Nov. 6, 2024
5:30 to 6:30 p.m.
Regional West Medical Plaza South, Conference Room 1

Managing Seasonal/ Holiday Stress

Dr. Holloway Lap Band Presentation and Appointments
Nov. 13, 2024
Surgery, Vascular Diagnostics
Please call 308-632-2872 to make an appointment.

In-Person Support Group
Dec. 4, 2024
5:30 to 6:30 p.m.
Regional West Medical Plaza South, Conference Room 1

Been There, Done That - Realistic Advice After Weight Loss Surgery

Dr. Holloway Lap Band Presentation and Appointments
Dec. 11, 2024
Surgery, Vascular Diagnostics
Please call 308-632-2872 to make an appointment.

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The Bariatric Beat at Regional West

Ask the Expert

Stress and How It Affects Obesity

Stress, as defined by the World Health Organization (WHO), is a state of worry or mental tension triggered by challenging situations. It's a natural human response, and chronic stress can significantly impact our health. Stress plays a key role in obesity, primarily due to the increased cortisol levels. Prolonged stress affects the nervous, immune, and metabolic systems, leading to hormonal imbalances that promote fat storage, insulin resistance, and even a stressed brain. These changes can also increase the risk for autoimmune disorders such as asthma and mental health issues like panic attacks.

Chronic stress and obesity are interlinked in a vicious cycle. Stress can lead to weight gain, and obesity can further exasperate stress. To manage stress, adopting healthy lifestyle habits is crucial. This includes reducing sugar intake, improving sleep quality, practicing mindfulness, and engaging in physical activities like yoga. Building a strong support system and focusing on the present moment are also essential strategies for breaking the stress obesity cycle and improving overall well-being.

Warmest regards,
Amber Schulze, MSN, APRN, FNP-C, Bariatric Coordinator



Health Tips

As summer fades into autumn, it's the perfect time to refresh your fitness routine. The cooler air and stunning scenery create ideal conditions for outdoor activities like walking, hiking, and cycling. For rainy days, consider indoor options like gym classes or home workouts. Establish a consistent routine by scheduling regular exercise starting with short sessions. Dress in layers to stay comfortable in unpredictable weather. Embrace the seasonal change as a chance to start fresh and prioritize your health

Dietitian's Corner: Focusing on Nutrition

by Karen Johnson, RD, CSO, LMNT, and Lori Miller, RD, CDCES, LMNT

October brings a season of warmth and indulgence. Check out this pumpkin recipe that is delicious and nutritious.

Pumpkin Soup

- 1 tbsp. butter
- 1 cup onion, chopped
- 3 tbsp. whole wheat flour
- ½ tsp. curry powder
- ¼ tsp. cumin
- ¼ tsp. ground nutmeg
- 2 garlic cloves, crushed
- ¼ tsp. salt
- 1 cup peeled and cubed sweet potato
- 2 (14 oz.) cans of low-sodium chicken broth
- 1 (15. oz.) can of pumpkin
- 1 cup 1% milk
- 1 tbsp. fresh lime juice



Melt butter in a Dutch oven or large sauce pan over medium-high heat. Sauté onion for three to four minutes, then add flour, curry, garlic, cumin, and nutmeg and sauté for one minute. Add sweet potatoes, salt, chicken broth, and pumpkin and bring to a boil. Reduce heat to medium-low and simmer partially covered for about 20-25 minutes or until sweet potatoes are cooked through and softened. Remove from heat and let stand for 10 minutes to cool. Place half of the pumpkin mixture in a blender and process until smooth. Using a strainer, pour soup back into pan. Repeat with rest of soup. Raise heat to medium, then stir in milk and cook for five minutes or until soup is heated through.

The Bariatric Beat at Regional West

November 2024



Upcoming Events:

In-Person Support Group
Dec. 4, 2024
5:30 to 6:30 p.m.
Regional West Medical Plaza South, Conference Room 1

Been There, Done That - Realistic Advice After Weight Loss Surgery

Dr. Holloway
Lap Band Presentation and Appointments
Dec. 11, 2024
Surgery, Vascular Diagnostics
Please call 308-632-2872 to make an appointment.

Special Announcements

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Health Tips

Simple Strength Training Exercises

Strength training is essential for weight loss and overall health. By building muscle, you boost your metabolism, meaning you burn more calories throughout the day — even at rest — supporting sustainable weight management. Strength training also improves bone health, reducing the risk of osteoporosis, and supports mental well-being by reducing anxiety and depression symptoms. Strength training also enhances balance, mobility, and body tone, making weight loss both effective and long-lasting. It's a powerful tool for overall health.

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The Bariatric Beat at Regional West

Ask the Expert

How does drinking more water help you lose weight?

About one-fifth of our daily water intake comes from food. If we do not drink enough water, the body will compensate by increasing hunger-drive, and therefore food intake. This leads to unnecessary calories and weight gain. In fact, dehydration is one of the main causes of overeating.

Water is essential in the metabolic reaction that breaks down fat. Hydrolysis, a chemical reaction where water breaks down chemical bonds, is the first step in lipolysis, the breakdown of fat cells. Without enough water intake, the body cannot break down stored fat or carbohydrates for energy.

We need more water as we exercise or increase activity. Water is lost from increased respiration and sweat, and metabolic waste is created by exercise and the breakdown of fat. Water is needed to flush these chemicals out of the body and make you feel better.

Replacing flavored drinks with water has been shown to help with weight loss and is an important step in your weight loss journey.

Jason LaTowsky, MD

Dietitian's Corner: Focusing on Nutrition

by Karen Johnson, RD, CSO, LMNT, and Lori Miller, RD, CDCES, LMNT

Sheet pan dinners are a lifesaver on busy nights. They minimize cleanup and allow you to cook everything at once, so you can relax while your meal roasts in the oven. This balanced meal provides a great source of protein from the chicken and plenty of fiber and vitamins from the root vegetables. You can easily swap out different vegetables based on what's in season or what you have on hand.

Sheet Pan Roasted Chicken with Root Vegetables

- 4 chicken thighs (bone-in, skin-on for more flavor)
- 2 sweet potatoes, cubed
- 2 carrots, sliced
- 1 red onion, quartered
- 1 tbsp. olive oil
- 1 tsp. paprika
- 1 tsp. garlic powder
- Salt and pepper to taste
- Fresh thyme or rosemary (optional)



Preheat the oven to 425°F. Arrange the chicken and vegetables on a sheet pan. Drizzle olive oil over everything, then sprinkle with paprika, garlic powder, salt, and pepper. Toss to coat evenly. Roast for 35-40 minutes, turning the vegetables halfway through, until the chicken is crispy, and the vegetables are tender. Garnish with fresh thyme or rosemary and serve hot.

The Bariatric Beat at Regional West

December 2024



Upcoming Events:

Dr. Holloway
Lap Band Presentation
and Appointments
Dec. 11, 2024
Surgery, Vascular Diagnostics
Please call 308-632-2872
to make an appointment.

In-Person Support Group
Jan. 8, 2025
5:30 to 6:30 p.m.
Regional West Medical Plaza
South, Conference Room 1

Join the Discussion: Is Obesity a Condition or a Calling for Change?

Special Announcements

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Success Stories

We're celebrating success stories! If you've achieved your weight loss goals through our medical weight management program or bariatric surgery, we'd love to hear from you. Share your journey to inspire others and showcase your incredible transformation. With your permission, we'd like to feature your photo and story to highlight the life-changing results of your achievements. Send your story to Amber.Schulze@rwhs.org today!

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The Bariatric Beat at Regional West

Ask the Expert

Balanced eating: Progress, not perfection!

All or nothing nutrition can lead to harmful eating habits, especially when perfectionism defines success or failure. This rigid mindset often contributes to eating disorders like bulimia, binge eating, or anorexia and creates fear or irrational thoughts around food. It can also trap individuals in unhealthy cycles of extreme dieting. Instead, aim for balance by embracing "shades of gray," or moderation and flexibility. Focus on incorporating diverse food groups to meet nutritional needs and adjust for age and environmental changes. If you're considering a strict diet plan, ask questions: is it sustainable? Have you tried it before? What worked or didn't?

Flexibility and nutrition support long term health without creating undue stress. Remember, progress takes time, and balance is the key to avoiding frustration or setbacks. Nutrition is both art and science; focus on consistency, not perfection.

Warmest regards,
Amber Schulze, MSN, APRN, FNP-C, Bariatric Coordinator



Health Tips

Every Minute Counts

Regular physical activity, even in short bouts, can significantly impact weight, BMI, and waist circumference. Current guidelines suggest aiming for 150-plus minutes per week of moderate to vigorous exercise, which benefits overall health and reduces obesity risk. Activities can be accumulated in as little as one-minute intervals or through sustained 10-minute sessions. Both methods contribute to long term health improvements.

Dietitian's Corner: Focusing on Nutrition

by Karen Johnson, RD, CSO, LMNT, and Lori Miller, RD, CDCES, LMNT

Spinach and red pepper frittatas are a perfect holiday brunch for Christmas morning. The vibrant red peppers add a festive touch, making it ideal for sharing with family and guests. Prepare the egg mixture the night before to save time.

Spinach and red pepper frittatas

- 1 small onion, diced
- 1 red bell pepper, diced
- 4 strips of turkey bacon, diced
- ½ tsp. salt and pepper
- 1 cup of loosely packed baby spinach, chopped
- 8 large eggs
- 2 oz. shredded parmesan cheese



Heat the oven to 375°F and heat a non-stick skillet to medium high heat. Make sure the skillet is oven safe. Sauté onion, bell pepper, and turkey bacon until onions are translucent and turkey bacon is starting to crisp. Sprinkle salt and pepper and stir. Add spinach and stir. Cook 30 to 60 seconds or until spinach starts to wilt. Whisk and add the eggs, moving the pan around a bit for eggs to surround it evenly. Sprinkle with cheese and move to the oven for eight to 10 minutes or until eggs look set. Remove with a hot pad and let it cool before serving.

The Bariatric Beat at Regional West

January 2025



Special Announcements

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Education Seminar

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Upcoming Events:

In-Person Support Group
Feb. 5, 2025
5:30 to 6:30 p.m.
Regional West Medical Plaza South, Conference Room 1

Conquer the Fear; Embrace Your Fitness Journey

In-Person Support Group
March. 5, 2025
5:30 to 6:30 p.m.
Regional West Medical Plaza South, Conference Room 1

Discover the Hidden Costs of Tiny Bites

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The Bariatric Beat at Regional West

Ask the Expert

Navigating Gatherings: Tips for Staying Focused

Special occasion meals don't have to derail your progress. Start with a plan. Think ahead and set realistic expectations, because perfection isn't the goal. Instead, aim for balance and enjoy special foods while staying aligned with your health goals.

Plan ahead and bring a healthy dish you love, eat a small meal beforehand to avoid arriving overly hungry, or balance snacks such as 10 nuts with fruit or high protein yogurt to prevent overeating. Practicing mindful eating by pausing to assess food options, choosing what truly appeals to you, and skipping the rest. Use smaller plates and fill half of your dish with veggies, a quarter of it with lean protein, and the rest with carbs. Eat slowly, savor each bite, and give your body time to signal fullness.

Handle social pressure with a polite responses such as, "Thank you, but I'm good for now." Focus on connections and activities beyond food, including helping hosts, playing games, or sharing traditions. Remember, these moments are about joy and togetherness, not just what's on your plate. You got this!

Warmest regards,
Amber Schulze, MSN, APRN, FNP-C, Bariatric Coordinator



Health Tips

Create a Winter Wellness Routine

Winter is the perfect time to nurture a wellness routine that supports your weight loss journey. Start small; stretch each morning to awaken your body, journal to center your mind, or plan meals to stay on track. These daily habits build a foundation of balance, helping you thrive through the busy season and beyond. Prioritize yourself; small steps lead to lasting results.

Dietitian's Corner: Focusing on Nutrition

by Karen Johnson, RD, CSO, LMNT, and Lori Miller, RD, CDCES, LMNT

Here is a bariatric-friendly meal that is high in protein, low in calories, and easy to prepare.

Grilled chicken and veggie bowl

Serves one
Nutrition facts: 25 to 30 grams of protein, 200-250 calories, and three to four grams of fiber

- 1 three-ounce grilled chicken breast, skinless
- 1 cup steamed or roasted non-starchy vegetables, such as zucchini, broccoli, or bell peppers
- 2 tablespoons of hummus or Greek yogurt as a light dressing or dip
- 1/4 cup cooked quinoa or cauliflower rice, optional for added texture and variety
- Fresh herbs such as parsley and cilantro
- A squeeze of lemon for flavor
- Garlic powder, paprika, salt, and pepper to taste



Grill or bake the chicken breast, seasoned with garlic powder, paprika, and a pinch of salt and pepper. Steam or roast the vegetables with a light spray of olive oil and your favorite seasonings. Arrange chicken and vegetables in a bowl. Add a small portion of quinoa or cauliflower rice if desired. Top with hummus or Greek yogurt for a creamy flavor addition. Garnish with fresh herbs and squeeze a lemon for brightness.

The Bariatric Beat at Regional West

February 2025



Upcoming Events:

In-Person Support Group
March 5, 2025
5:30 to 6:30 p.m.
Regional West Medical Plaza
South, Conference Room 1

Join the Discussion: Discover the Hidden Costs of Tiny Bites

In-Person Support Group
April 2, 2025
5:30 to 6:30 p.m.
Regional West Medical Plaza
South, Conference Room 1

Join the Discussion: Break Free From Within: Redefining Self and Health

Special Announcements

Monthly Support Group

Embark on this exciting journey with our support group meeting, held on the first Wednesday of every month. Join us as we build a supportive network to celebrate successes and navigate challenges together.

Education Seminar

Dive into our free education seminar for a comprehensive understanding of benefits, potential risks, and the overall process of bariatric surgery. Scan the QR code at the bottom of this page or visit RWMCWeightLossOptions.com to register. Empower yourself to make informed decisions for a healthier life!

Success Stories

We're celebrating success stories! If you've achieved your weight loss goals through our medical weight management program or bariatric surgery, we'd love to hear from you. Share your journey to inspire others and showcase your incredible transformation. With your permission, we'd like to feature your photo and story to highlight the life-changing results of your achievements. Send your story to Amber.Schulze@rwhs.org today!

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Regional West
4021 Avenue B | Scottsbluff, NE 69361
308-632-2872 | RWHS.org

The Bariatric Beat at Regional West

Ask the Expert

Obesity is Not a Motivation Problem

Almost daily people come into the office asking, “Why don’t just do it?” as if weight loss is purely a matter of willpower. This misconception is harmful. Obesity is a complex medical condition influenced by genetics, physiology, environment, and social factors — not just motivation.

Many people believe that if they were truly motivated, they would lose weight. But motivation isn’t the issue. If you take care of your family, go to work, or complete daily responsibilities, you already are motivated. The challenges lie in where and how that motivation is directed, as well as the biological and environmental obstacles that impact weight regulation. Studies show that being harder on yourself does not improve motivation; it often has the opposite effect.

Even after weight loss, maintaining it is difficult due to metabolic adaptations, environmental triggers, and physiological responses. Long term success requires ongoing medical, emotional, and lifestyle support. Viewing obesity as a motivation issue oversimplifies a complex reality and contributes to self-blame and stigma. Instead of focusing on motivation alone, embracing a broader understanding of obesity fosters self-compassion and empowers sustainable strategies. Success comes from knowledge, support, and long-term commitment to overall well-being — not just sheer willpower.

Warmest regards,
Amber Schulze, MSN, APRN, FNP-C, Bariatric Coordinator



Health Tips

Mental and Physical Health are Intertwined

Mental and physical health are deeply intertwined. Stress can disrupt sleep, anxiety can cause digestive issues, and emotional struggles impact overall well-being. Unlike visible injuries, mental health challenges are often overlooked, yet they are just as important to address. Regular exercise, a balanced diet, quality sleep, and positive self-talk can improve mental health. Seeking support through therapy or medical care is a sign of strength. Prioritizing both mind and body leads to lasting well-being.

Dietitian’s Corner: Focusing on Nutrition

by Karen Johnson, RD, CSO, LMNT, and Lori Miller, RD, CDCES, LMNT

Here is a bariatric-friendly meal that is high in protein, low in calories, and easy to prepare.

Mediterranean Zucchini

- 2 zucchinis, cut in half, lengthwise
- 2 tsp olive oil
- ½ tsp. lemon zest
- ½ tsp. dried basil
- ½ tsp. dried oregano
- 1/8 tsp. crushed red pepper flakes
- 1/8 tsp. salt
- 4 tsp. grated Parmesan cheese



Preheat the oven to 400°F. Place the zucchini with the cut side up on a baking sheet. Drizzle the oil over each half. In a small bowl, stir together the lemon zest, basil, dried oregano, crushed red pepper flakes, and salt. Sprinkle over the zucchini. Bake for 20 minutes, or until zucchini is just tender. Remove from the oven. Immediately sprinkle each with 1 tsp. of Parmesan cheese. Let stand for 5 minutes before serving.

The Bariatric Beat at Regional West

March 2025



Special Announcements

Monthly Support Group

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Education Seminar

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Success Stories

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Upcoming Events:

In-Person Support Group
April 2, 2025
5:30 to 6:30 p.m.
Regional West Medical Plaza South, Conference Room 1

Break Free from Within: Redefining Self and Health

In-Person Support Group
May 7, 2025
5:30 to 6:30 p.m.
Regional West Medical Plaza South, Conference Room 1

Find Clarity in a World of Health Hype!

In-Person Support Group
June 4, 2025
5:30 to 6:30 p.m.
Regional West Medical Plaza South, Conference Room 1

Is Fast Food Truly the Foe?

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The Bariatric Beat at Regional West

Ask the Expert

Understanding Insulin Resistance As a Key to Effective Weight Management

Insulin resistance is a common but often misunderstood condition that plays a significant role in weight management, obesity, and metabolic health. When the body's cells become less responsive to insulin, the pancreas produces more to compensate. This leads to higher insulin levels, promoting fat storage-especially around the abdomen-while also increasing cravings and slowing fat burning. Over time, insulin resistance can contribute to prediabetes and type 2 diabetes, making weight loss even more challenging.

The good news is that insulin resistance is manageable through targeted lifestyle changes. A balanced diet rich in fiber, lean proteins, and healthy fats can stabilize blood sugar and improve insulin sensitivity. Regular physical activity, including aerobic exercise like walking or cycling and strength training, enhances the body's ability to use glucose effectively. Managing stress through mindfulness, deep breathing, or yoga can also reduce cortisol levels, which negatively impact insulin function. Additionally, prioritizing quality sleep (seven to nine hours per night) supports hormonal balance and metabolic health.

If you struggle with persistent weight gain, fatigue, or sugar cravings, insulin resistance may be a factor. Consulting a healthcare provider for evaluation and guidance can help you create a personalized plan for improving insulin function and achieving sustainable weight loss. Small, consistent changes can make a significant difference, empowering you to take control of your health and well-being. By addressing insulin resistance, you can break through weight loss barriers and work toward long-term success.

Warmest regards,
Amber Schulze, MSN, APRN, FNP-C, Bariatric Coordinator



Health Tips

Spring into Better Health!

Take time to refocus your health goals and make simple, effective changes. Move your workouts outdoors and soak up the sunshine. Fuel your body with seasonal fruits and veggies for a natural energy boost. Establish a calming evening routine and a consistent sleep schedule. Prioritize mental well-being with journaling and deep breathing. These small shifts will help you reset, recharge, and step into spring feeling healthier, stronger and more refreshed!

Dietitian's Corner: Focusing on Nutrition

by Karen Johnson, RD, CSO, LMNT, and Lori Miller, RD, CDCES, LMNT

Lately, I have been enjoying simple snacking. These high protein bell pepper boats are a hit at my house.

High Protein Bell Pepper Boats

- 6 mini bell peppers
- 24 oz. low-fat cottage cheese
- Feta cheese
- Everything bagel seasoning

Cut each mini bell pepper in half lengthwise and remove the seeds and stems for a total of 12 pieces. Place a slice of bell pepper on a serving plate. Top with ¼ cup of cottage cheese. Sprinkle with feta cheese and everything bagel seasoning. Serve immediately. Enjoy!



The Bariatric Beat at Regional West

April 2025



Special Announcements

Monthly Support Group

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Education Seminar

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Your Weight Loss Journey Continues

Bariatric surgery is just the beginning of your transformation, and we're committed to your long term success! Our clinical reviewer and bariatric coordinator are reaching out to past patients to provide ongoing support, celebrate achievements, and make sure your health remains a priority.

We'd love to hear your story, help keep you motivated, and inspire others with your journey. Your success matters, and we're here every step of the way. Stay connected, stay healthy, and let's continue this journey together!

Upcoming Events:

In-Person Support Group
May 7, 2025
5:30 to 6:30 p.m.
Regional West Medical Plaza South, Conference Room 1

Find Clarity in a World of Health Hype!

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Is Fast Food Truly the Foe?

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The Bariatric Beat at Regional West

Ask the Expert

Internal Bias

Let's talk about internalized weight bias. If you're on a weight loss journey or considering bariatric surgery, you may recognize that inner voice echoing society's judgments. It's when we absorb negativity from doctors, social circles, or even strangers, making us believe our worth is tied to our weight.

Experiencing bias can lead to different reactions. Some fight back, others withdraw, and some seek comfort in food. Over time, these messages become part of our self-talk. But ask yourself: would you tell a loved one they must lose weight before seeing a doctor? Would you tell a friend they're too big for the gym? If not, why say it to yourself?

Challenging internal bias takes time, patience, and support. Therapy, support groups, and compassionate communities can help. If you're struggling, seek a mental health professional through your healthcare facility or resources like Psychologytoday.com.

This journey isn't just about weight; it's about self-worth. Let's not just fight external bias but also change how we see ourselves. You are enough.

Warmest regards,
Amber Schulze, MSN, APRN, FNP-C, Bariatric Coordinator



Health Tips

Spring into Better Health!

Spring is the perfect time to reconnect with nature and boost your well-being. Just 10 minutes of walking barefoot on the ground or gardening can improve focus and reduce symptoms of depression. Gardening helps you stay grounded while walking barefoot (known as "earthing") calms your mind and reduces stress. Take advantage of the season and spend 10 minutes outside to refresh, recharge, and let nature work its magic on your mental and emotional health!

Dietitian's Corner: Focusing on Nutrition

by Karen Johnson, RD, CSO, LMNT, and Lori Miller, RD, CDCES, LMNT

Check out this fresh spring recipe for keto deviled eggs!

Keto Deviled Eggs

- 6 hard boiled eggs, cooled
- ¼ cup mayonnaise
- ½ teaspoon prepared mustard
- 1 tablespoon dill pickle juice, or to taste
- Salt and pepper to taste
- Pinch of paprika

Peel hard boiled eggs and slice in half lengthwise. Gently remove the yolks and place in a bowl. Add the remaining ingredients, except for paprika, and mash until smooth. Season with salt and pepper to taste. Place filling in a piping bag or freezer bag and pipe into the egg whites. Sprinkle with paprika and serve.



The Bariatric Beat at Regional West

May 2025



Special Announcements

Amber Schulze Certification

We're excited to share that Bariatric Coordinator Amber Schulze, MSN, APRN, FNP-C, has earned the Certificate of Advanced Education in Obesity Medicine from the Obesity Medicine Association! This achievement strengthens our program's commitment to treating obesity as a chronic disease and enhances the expert, compassionate care we provide every patient on their weight loss journey.

Monthly Support Group

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Education Seminar

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Your Weight Loss Journey Continues

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We'd love to hear your story, help keep you motivated, and inspire others with your journey. Your success matters, and we're here every step of the way. Stay connected, stay healthy, and let's continue this journey together!

Upcoming Events:

In-Person Support Group
June 4, 2025
5:30 to 6:30 p.m.
Regional West Medical Plaza South, Conference Room 1

Think Twice: Is Fast Food Truly Foe?

In-Person Support Group
July 2, 2025
5:30 to 6:30 p.m.
Regional West Medical Plaza South, Conference Room 1

Consistency is Key: Unlock the Secret to Lasting Health

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The Bariatric Beat at Regional West

Ask the Expert

A Comprehensive and Compassionate Approach to Obesity Care

Regional West Medical Center's Bariatric Weight Loss Program proudly offers a comprehensive, compassionate approach to treating obesity as the chronic, complex disease it truly is. Our program combines the power of medical weight management (MWM) with proven surgical options to create personalized, long-term solutions for weight loss and improved health.

Whether you're just beginning your journey or seeking new tools for lasting success, our team is here to support you every step of the way with understanding, expertise, and respect. Our multidisciplinary group includes compassionate physicians and providers who recognize the emotional and physical challenges of obesity and are dedicated to helping you succeed without shame or judgment. We also offer support group sessions that foster connection, encouragement, and a sense of community among patients. For further understanding of how bariatric surgery provides treatment for obesity, check out the fact sheet from the Obesity Action Coalition (OAC).

At Regional West Medical Center's Bariatric Weight Loss Program, you're never alone; we're honored to walk this journey toward better health with you.

Warmest regards,
Amber Schulze, MSN, APRN, FNP-C, Bariatric Coordinator



Health Tips

Patient Awareness Statement

Many individuals face real barriers when seeking support for weight and health, such as limited access to care, high costs, and the fear of being judged. Regional West Medical Center's Bariatric Weight Loss Program understands that obesity is a complex, chronic condition, not a personal failure. Our team is here to offer compassionate, respectful, and effective care tailored to your needs. You deserve support without shame, and we're here to help.

Dietitian's Corner: Focusing on Nutrition

Delve into this fresh and flavorful recipe packed with heart-healthy fats, protein, and fiber.

Lemon Dill Salmon with Asparagus and Potatoes

- 2 salmon filets
- 1 bunch asparagus, trimmed
- 2 cups fingerling potatoes, halved
- 1 tablespoon olive oil
- 1 teaspoon dried dill
- Juice and zest of one lemon
- Salt and pepper to taste

Preheat the oven to 400°F. On a lined baking sheet, toss potatoes with half of the olive oil, salt, and pepper. Roast for 15 minutes. Remove the tray, and push potatoes to the side. Add salmon and asparagus. Drizzle everything with remaining olive oil, lemon juice, zest, and sprinkle with dill. Return to the oven and bake for another 12 to 15 minutes, until salmon flakes easily.



OAC
Obesity Action Coalition
Fact Sheet

Why it Makes Sense to Provide Treatment for Obesity through Bariatric Surgery

Reason	Evidence/Details
Obesity is widespread, deadly and expensive.	• 34% of Americans are affected by obesity[1] with 5.7% affected by severe obesity (more than 100 pounds overweight).[2] • Approximately 75% of those affected by severe obesity have at least one co-morbid condition (diabetes, hypertension, sleep apnea, etc.), which significantly increases the risk of premature death.[3] • Life expectancy for a 20-year-old male affected by severe obesity is 13 years shorter than a normal weight male of the same age.[4] • Annual direct medical expenditures attributable to obesity are $147 billion.[5]
Obesity disproportionately affects minority and poor populations.	• African-Americans are disproportionately affected by obesity. Caucasians make up 75% of the U.S. population, but only 64% of the population affected by severe obesity. In contrast, African-Americans make up 12% of the population but 23% of the population is affected by severe obesity.[6] • Poor populations (those making less than $20,000 annually) show a similar increase in likelihood of being affected by severe obesity.[5]
Bariatric surgery is a life-saving procedure as it is proven to increase life expectancy.	• Christou study compared those affected by severe obesity who were treated with surgery versus those who were not. It found an 89% reduction in the risk of death throughout five years in the surgery group. **In other words, those who received surgery were nine times less likely to die over the next five years.**[7] • New England Journal of Medicine study comparing 15,000 plus individuals affected by severe obesity found a 40% lower risk of death over 7 years in surgery patients for all causes. The study found a 52% lower risk of death from obesity related illnesses including a 92% lower risk of death from diabetes.[8]
Bariatric surgery resolves potentially fatal co-morbid conditions.	• A meta-analysis study including more than 22,000 patients showed the following effects of surgery on co-morbidities: ◊ Diabetes was completely resolved in 76.8% of patients. ◊ High cholesterol was resolved or improved in more than 70% of patients. ◊ High blood pressure was resolved in 61.7% of patients. • Sleep apnea was resolved in 85.7% of patients.[9] • Other studies have shown even higher (82%) resolution of diabetes10 and "profound improvement in obstructive sleep apnea."[11]
Weight-loss post-surgery is extensive and durable.	• A long term study following patients for up to 14 years after surgery found that 89% of weight-loss was maintained.[12]
The risk-benefit tradeoff for bariatric surgery is favorable.	• The mortality rate for bariatric surgery varies by surgeon. Experienced surgeons have mortality rates ranging from .02%-.5% (averaging the rate for all types of procedures).[13,14] The risks of not receiving surgery is far higher as demonstrated by the Christou study where those who did not receive surgery were almost nine times more likely to die.[15]
Coverage for bariatric surgery makes economic sense.	• Downstream savings associated with bariatric surgery are estimated to offset the costs in 2 years (laparoscopic procedure) to 4 years (open procedure).[16] • Post-surgery drug costs for diabetic and anti-hypertensive medications decrease dramatically. Potteiger study found a 77.3% savings.[17]

OAC
Obesity Action Coalition
Fact Sheet

Why it Makes Sense to Provide Treatment for Obesity through Bariatric Surgery

Sources:

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2. CDC. Prevalence of overweight, obesity, and extreme obesity among adults: United States, Trends 1976--80 through 2005--2006. Hyattsville, MD: US Department of Health and Human Services, National Center for Health Statistics, CDC; 2008.
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17. Potteiger CE, Paragi PR, Inverso NA, et al. Bariatric Surgery: Shedding the Monetary Weight of Prescription Costs in the Managed Care Arena. Obesity Surgery 2004, 14, pp. 725-730.

Contact the OAC

If you have any questions regarding the above information or would like to interview an OAC representative, please contact James Zervios, *OAC Director of Communications*, at **jzervios@obesityaction.org**.

Obesity Action Coalition
4511 North Himes Ave., Ste. 250 • Tampa, FL 33614 • (800) 717-3117
www.ObesityAction.org • info@obesityaction.org

The Bariatric Beat at Regional West

June 2025



Special Announcements

Monthly Support Group

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Education Seminar

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Success Stories

Shoutout to our recent 100 lbs. down club members Anita Pennel, Brittney Hall, Rebecca Bleck, Anna Cochran, and Diane Summerville! These ladies have achieved incredible weight loss milestones following weight loss surgery. We are proud of you and your continued progress toward better health!



Upcoming Events:

In-Person Support Group
July 2, 2025
5:30 to 6:30 p.m.
Regional West Medical Plaza South, Conference Room 1

Consistency is Key: Unlock the Secret to Lasting Health

In-Person Support Group
Aug. 6, 2025
5:30 to 6:30 p.m.
Regional West Medical Plaza South, Conference Room 1

Reframe the Fight: Managing Obesity for Long-Term Success

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Regional West

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308-632-2872 | RWHS.org

Ask the Expert

Fast Food and Your Journey: Making Peace, Not War

Fast food often gets a bad rap, but it doesn't have to derail your progress. For those in medical weight management or post-bariatric surgery, success lies in balance and awareness, not perfection. While many menu items are high in calories and sodium, smarter options like grilled proteins, smaller portions, and skipping extras can make a difference.

Beyond nutrition, fast food is tied to emotion, comfort, convenience, and even celebration. Learning to pause, plan, and choose mindfully puts you in control. As the Obesity Medicine Association reminds us, long-term change is built on progress, not guilt.

Instead of fearing fast food, approach it with a new mindset. You're not just managing meals; you're building a healthier relationship with food, one choice at a time.

You have the tools. You have the strength. Every step forward counts.

Warmest regards,
Amber Schulze, MSN, APRN, FNP-C, Bariatric Coordinator

Dietitian's Corner: Focusing on Nutrition

Cod and asparagus bake



- 4 salmon filets (4 oz. each)
- 1 lb. fresh thin asparagus, trimmed
- 1 pint cherry tomatoes, halved
- 2 tablespoons lemon juice
- 1 ½ teaspoons grated lemon zest
- ¼ cup grated Romano cheese

Preheat oven to 375° Fahrenheit. Place cod and asparagus in a 15 x 10 x 1" baking pan brushed with oil. Add tomatoes, cut sides down. Brush fish with lemon juice; sprinkle with lemon zest. Sprinkle fish and vegetables with Romano cheese. Bake until fish just begins to flake easily with a fork, about 12 minutes. Remove pan from the oven; preheat broiler. Broil cod mixture three to four inches from heat until vegetables are lightly browned, about two to three minutes.

The Bariatric Beat at Regional West

August 2025



Special Announcements

Monthly Support Group

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Education Seminar

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Success Stories

We're looking for success stories, and we know they're out there! Have you experienced a victory on your weight loss journey, big or small? We want to hear about it! We believe every success matters, whether it's a number on scale, a health improvement, or simply feeling better in your daily life.

Don't be shy–your story could inspire someone else to take the first step. If Regional West has made a difference in your life and you'd like to share your personal success story, let us know! We'd be honored to celebrate your journey.

Upcoming Events:

In-Person Support Group
Sept. 3, 2025
5:30 to 6:30 p.m.
Regional West Medical Plaza South, Conference Room 1

Find the Energy You've Been Missing – Explore Why Fatigue Lingers

In-Person Support Group
Oct. 1, 2025
5:30 to 6:30 p.m.
Regional West Medical Plaza South, Conference Room 1

Cravings Decoded: Understand Food Addiction and Take Control

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The Bariatric Beat at Regional West

Ask the Expert

Navigating Relapse in Obesity Care

Obesity is a chronic, relapsing disease that requires consistent, individualized medical care. Relapse is not a sign of failure–it is a natural part of managing long-term conditions such as diabetes or hypertension. The same applies to obesity. Setbacks are expected and manageable with the right support system in place. Regular follow-up appointments allow us to adjust treatment plans, monitor progress, and address new or ongoing challenges before they become barriers.

We strongly encourage routine annual evaluations and screenings so your care remains on track. For individuals with a history of bariatric surgery or medical weight loss, this includes annual–and sometimes semi-annual–bariatric-specific lab work. These labs are essential for monitoring nutritional status, organ function, and overall health outcomes.



Health Tips

Fall is a natural time to reset routines, making it the perfect season to prioritize your annual health screening. The U.S. Preventive Services Task Force recommends yearly obesity screening and ongoing support for adults with a BMI of 30 or higher. These evaluations help detect early issues, guide treatment, and monitor lab values, especially after bariatric surgery. Your health deserves attention year-round; schedule your visit today and start the season focused on you.

Have you had your annual bariatric labs checked? If not, now is the time. Keeping up with these routine evaluations allows your provider to detect issues early, provide timely interventions, and support long-term success. Your health and well-being are our highest priorities.

Obesity management is not about perfection; it is about persistence, support, and routine care. Whether you are navigating a relapse, maintaining progress, or just getting started, you deserve comprehensive care that treats obesity as the complex, chronic disease it is.

Warmest regards,
Amber Schulze, MSN, APRN, FNP-C, Bariatric Coordinator

Dietitian's Corner: Focusing on Nutrition

Strawberry salsa



- 20 strawberries, finely diced
- 1/3 medium red onion, minced
- 1 jalapeno, minced (remove seeds for less heat)
- Juice of 1 lime
- Handful of cilantro, chopped
- Fresh cracked black pepper

Simply mix these ingredients together and enjoy!

The Bariatric Beat at Regional West

September 2025



Upcoming Events:

In-Person Support Group
Oct. 1, 2025
5:30 to 6:30 p.m.
Regional West Medical Plaza South, Conference Room 1

Cravings Decoded: Understand Food Addiction and Take Control

In-Person Support Group
Nov. 5, 2025
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Winter Wellness Starts Here: Stay Strong, Stay Healthy

Special Announcements

Monthly Support Group

Embark on this exciting journey with our support group meeting, held on the first Wednesday of every month. Join us as we build a supportive network to celebrate successes and navigate challenges together.

Education Seminar

You can discover all you need to know about stapling bariatric procedures through our free education seminar. Dive in for a comprehensive understanding of benefits, potential risks, and the overall process. Scan the QR code at the bottom of this page or visit RWMCWeightLossOptions.com to register. Empower yourself to make informed decisions for a healthier life!

Success Stories

Congratulations to Brandy Oldaker, Gaytha Oldaker, and Sandy Richins on losing 100 lbs. and counting!

We're looking for success stories, and we know they're out there! Have you experienced a victory on your weight loss journey, big or small? We want to hear about it! We believe every success matters, whether it's a number on scale, a health improvement, or simply feeling better in your daily life.

Don't be shy - your story could inspire someone else to take the first step. If Regional West has made a difference in your life and you'd like to share your personal success story, let us know! We'd be honored to celebrate your journey.

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The Bariatric Beat at Regional West

Ask the Expert

When Tiredness Signals Something More

Feeling constantly tired is a challenge many people face, especially those actively working on weight loss. However, persistent exhaustion may indicate underlying medical conditions, particularly because obesity is recognized as a chronic disease. In her article "Why Am I So Tired," Dr. Nadia B. Pietrzykowska highlights that fatigue should never be ignored, as it often points to treatable health issues.

Several conditions associated with excess weight can drain energy. Hypothyroidism, a condition in which the thyroid produces too little hormone, slows metabolism and frequently leads to fatigue. Prediabetes and diabetes interfere with blood sugar regulation, leaving individuals feeling depleted even with adequate sleep. Anemia, metabolic syndrome, and sleep apnea are other common contributors to low energy levels. Hormonal changes, such as those occurring during menopause in women or low testosterone in men, can intensify tiredness. Nutritional deficiencies, particularly low iron or vitamin B12, are also widespread and can go undetected without proper testing. These challenges are not a reflection of personal weakness but rather consequences of complex biological processes that accompany obesity.

The good news is that interventions can make a meaningful difference. Even modest weight loss of around 10% can reverse prediabetes and improve energy. Treating thyroid disorders, correcting vitamin deficiencies, or addressing sleep apnea can significantly restore vitality. Small, consistent lifestyle adjustments combined with medical evaluation can help individuals feel more energetic and capable of sustaining healthy habits over time.

Anyone experiencing persistent fatigue should speak with a healthcare professional to identify potential causes and receive appropriate care.



Health Tips

If you are having difficulties on your weight loss journey, remember to:

1. **Check for underlying medical issues.** Fatigue can signal conditions like thyroid problems, anemia, sleep apnea, or prediabetes. Speak with your physician or provider about your concerns.
2. **Focus on balanced nutrition.** Be sure you are getting adequate iron, vitamin B12, protein, and essential nutrients to support energy levels.
3. **Prioritize sleep.**

Dietitian's Corner: Focusing on Nutrition

Broccoli and Cheddar Mini Quiches



- 2 cups chopped broccoli
- 1 cup almond milk
- 1 cup heavy whipping cream
- 4 extra large eggs
- 1 cup shredded cheddar cheese
- ½ tsp. salt
- ½ tsp. pepper
- ¼ tsp. nutmeg

Preheat the oven to 350°F and line a large, rimmed baking sheet with foil. Grease eight cups in a 12-cup muffin tin and set aside. Pour one inch of water into a large saucepan and insert a steamer basket. Place the broccoli in the steamer basket, cover the pot, and steam over high heat until just tender, about five to six minutes. Let broccoli cool slightly, then chop into small pieces. In a medium bowl, whisk together the almond milk, cream, and eggs. Stir in the cheese, salt, pepper, nutmeg, and chopped broccoli. Place the muffin tin on the baking sheet, then ladle the egg mixture into the prepared muffin cups, filling each cup. Bake until lightly browned and set in the center, for about 25 minutes.

The Bariatric Beat at Regional West

December 2025



Special Announcements

Wednesday Support Group

Embark on this exciting journey with our support group meeting, scheduled the first Wednesday of every month. These sessions are designed to foster a sense of community, share experiences, and offer valuable insights. Join us as we build a supportive network to celebrate successes and navigate challenges together.

Education Seminar

Did you know? You can discover all you need to know about stapling bariatric procedures through our free education seminar. Dive in for a comprehensive understanding of benefits, potential risks, and the overall process. Scan the QR code at the bottom of this page or visit RWMCWeightLossOptions.com to register. Empower yourself to make informed decisions for a healthier life!

We're Looking for Success Stories – and We know They're Out There!

Have you experienced a victory on your weight loss journey, big or small? We want to hear about it! At Regional West Bariatric Weight Loss Program, we believe every success matters, whether it's a number on scale, a health improvement, or simply feeling better in your daily life.

Don't be shy – your story could inspire someone else to take the first step. If Regional West has made a difference in your life and you'd like to share your personal success story, let us know! We'd be honored to celebrate your journey.

Upcoming Events:

In-Person Support Group
Jan. 7, 2026
5:30 to 6:30 p.m.
Regional West Medical Plaza South, Conference Room 1

Goal setting, habit formation, recommitment

In-Person Support Group
Feb. 4, 2026
5:30 to 6:30 p.m.
Regional West Medical Plaza South, Conference Room 1

Body image, self compassion, adjusting to rapid physical changes

bitly

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The Bariatric Beat at Regional West

Ask the Expert

Mindset Reset: Outsmarting the Thoughts That Slow Your Progress

This month's Bariatrics support group focused on an important theme inspired by the article "Sneaky Thoughts and Sticky Feelings: A Guide to Getting Unstuck." Together, we explored how unhelpful thoughts and lingering emotions can quietly influence the choices we make on our weight loss journey.

Sneaky thoughts like all-or-nothing thinking, catastrophizing, or assuming feelings are facts often appear automatically and shape behaviors without us realizing it. Sticky feelings such as shame, frustration, or overwhelm tend to linger and can easily pull us off track when they aren't acknowledged. Our discussion emphasized that these patterns are normal, especially after bariatric surgery or during long-term weight management. What matters most is learning how to recognize them and gently shift our thinking.

Participants shared expert-level insight as they advised one another on how to get "unstuck." Strategies included naming the thought or emotion, separating facts from feelings, using the same supportive language one would offer a patient, and focusing on one small, doable next step rather than attempting to fix everything at once. Many noted that speaking to themselves with the same professionalism and compassion they show others helped reduce guilt and increased motivation.

We closed with a reminder that setbacks are part of the process, not a sign of failure. Progress continues when we stay curious, aware, and willing to take the next step, even if it is small. Emotional and cognitive tools like these are also reinforced by ASMBS guidelines, which highlight the importance of ongoing behavioral support in achieving long-term bariatric success. You are not stuck – you are learning, growing, and moving forward.

Warmest regards,
Amber Schulze, MSN, APRN, FNP-C, Bariatric Coordinator



Health Tips

Five Helpful Tips to Get "Unstuck"

1. Name it to tame it: When a sneaky thought or strong feeling shows up, label it. Naming an emotion reduces its intensity and gives you back control.
2. Talk to yourself like a professional: Ask, "What would I tell my patient, friend, or loved one?" This instantly softens self-criticism and promotes healthier choices.
3. Feelings aren't facts: Just because you feel overwhelmed or off track doesn't mean you are. Pause, breathe, and look for evidence before reacting.
4. Replace "fix everything" with "do one thing." Overwhelm disappears when you focus on the next small, realistic step. One action today instead of a perfect plan tomorrow.
5. Normalize the ups and downs: Every journey includes stalls, setbacks, and emotional days. Progress is built on consistency, not perfection, small steps count, and getting unstuck is a skill you can practice.

Dietitian's Corner by Amber

Blueberry Barbecued Chicken Recipe



- ½ cup diced onion
- 1 tablespoon olive oil
- 2 cups frozen wild blueberries
- ¼ cup ketchup
- ¼ cup balsamic vinegar
- ¼ cup dark brown sugar
- ½ teaspoon salt
- 6 six-ounce boneless, skinless chicken breasts

1. Prepare and heat grill.
2. On a stove, heat a medium saucepan over medium-high heat. Add olive oil and sauté onion for 2 minutes, or until translucent. Add blueberries, ketchup, balsamic vinegar, brown sugar, and salt. Stir well. Bring to a simmer and cook, stirring occasionally, for 4 minutes.
3. Use an immersion blender (or transfer to a blender) to blend until smooth. Transfer ½ cup of sauce to one bowl and reserve for serving. Transfer remaining sauce to a second bowl for grilling.
4. Pound chicken breasts to flatten to ½-inch thickness. Place flattened chicken breasts on prepared grill. Cook for 5 minutes on one side, turn and grill another 5 minutes.
5. Spread blueberry barbecue sauce evenly over chicken; grill 1 minute.
6. Turn chicken and spoon larger portion of sauce evenly over chicken; grill 1 minute longer. Chicken is cooked when internal temperature reaches 165°F.
7. Serve with reserved ½ cup blueberry barbecue sauce.

Nutrition Information
Per serving (1/6 of recipe): Calories: 292; Total fat: 6g; Saturated fat: 1g; Cholesterol: 94mg; Sodium: 385mg; Carbohydrates: 22g; Fiber: 1g; Sugars: 18g; Protein: 35g; Potassium: 397mg; Phosphorus: 267mg Note: Nutritional information is provided as an estimate only.

The Bariatric Beat at Regional West

January 2026



Special Announcements

Introducing Our Wednesday Support Group

Embark on this exciting journey with our support group, scheduled for the first Wednesday of every month. Join us as we build a supportive network to celebrate successes and navigate challenges together.

Education Seminar

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Success Stories

"My whole life I have been overweight. Growing up, I was always athletic and involved in sports but could never shake the extra weight. After getting married and having children, my weight soared to 293 pounds, and in January 2025 I finally had enough. I started doing my best to lose weight on my own and was able to lose about 20 pounds before coming to a halt. I couldn't do anything to get the scale to move again. I made an appointment to see Amber Schulze, MSN, APRN, FNP-C, Bariatric Coordinator, in April and since then, with her help, I have lost another 100 pounds. I am now 172 pounds, less than I weighed in high school.

Amber and the Medical Weight Management program helped me to get my life back. She kept me accountable with tough love when I offered excuses. My advice for others is stick with it, don't take the tough conversations personally, accept the advice they offer you, and ultimately remember that it is hard, but you can do it." – Lauren Gartrell

Upcoming Events:

In-Person Support Group
Feb. 4, 2026
5:30 to 6:30 p.m.
Regional West Medical Plaza South, Conference Room 1

Body Image, Self Compassion, and Adjusting to Rapid Physical Changes

In-Person Support Group
March 4, 2026
5:30 to 6:30 p.m.
Regional West Medical Plaza South, Conference Room 1

Resistance Training for Metabolic Protection

Regional West
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The Bariatric Beat at Regional West

Ask the Expert

Staying Motivated for the Long Haul

One of the most common questions raised in our support group is how to stay motivated when the initial excitement fades and real-life sets in. What we learned together is that motivation is not something you either have or don't have. It changes over time, and that is normal. Long-term success comes from understanding this reality and planning for it rather than feeling discouraged by it.

Motivation often dips during periods of stress, fatigue, or routine. This does not mean you are failing; it means you are human. Progress is not defined by perfection but by your ability to adjust, regroup, and continue moving forward in smaller ways. When motivation is low, consistency matters more than intensity. Doing something, even if it feels minimal, keeps you connected to your goals.



Health Tips

Five Helpful Tips to Stay Motivated

1. Focus on small, achievable actions rather than big outcomes
2. Adjust your goals during stressful periods instead of quitting
3. Use routines to guide you when motivation is low
4. Practice supportive self-talk when progress slows
5. Stay connected to your support group and care team

We also talked about the importance of self-compassion. Harsh self-talk and all-or-nothing thinking can quickly derail progress. Treating setbacks as learning opportunities allows you to refocus without shame. Support systems, including follow-up visits and group connections, play a critical role in maintaining momentum over time.

Remember, weight management is a long-term journey, not a short sprint. Success is built through habits, routines, and realistic expectations that can withstand life's ups and downs.

Warmest regards,
Amber Schulze, MSN, APRN, FNP-C, Bariatric Coordinator

Dietitian's Corner by Amber

Chicken Stuffed Bell Peppers

- 1 Tbsp. olive oil
- 1 lb. skinless chicken breast
- 1 tsp. Italian seasoning
- Dash of ground pepper
- 1 c. cherry tomatoes
- 2 1/2 c. reduced fat shredded mozzarella
- 3/4 c. part skim ricotta
- 1/3 c. basil
- 2 cloves garlic, minced
- 4 bell peppers, halved (seeds removed)
- 1/2 c. low-sodium chicken broth
- Drizzle balsamic glaze



Preheat the oven to 350 °F. In a large skillet over medium heat, heat oil. Add chicken and season with Italian seasoning and pepper. Cook until chicken is golden, about eight minutes per side. Transfer to a cutting board and let cool for five minutes, then dice. In a large bowl, stir together cherry tomatoes, cooked chicken, 1 1/2 cups mozzarella, ricotta, basil, and garlic, and season with pepper. Arrange the bell peppers in a baking dish. Stuff tomato mixture into the peppers and sprinkle the tops with the remaining cup of mozzarella. Pour chicken broth into the bottom of the baking dish (to help the peppers steam) and cover with foil. Bake for 40 minutes or until the peppers are tender and the cheese is melted. Garnish with more basil, drizzle with balsamic glaze, and serve.

Nutrition Information
Serving Size: 1 serving (1/2 pepper), Calories: 259, Fat: 12g, Carbs: 10g, Fiber: 3g, Sugar: 1g, Protein: 31g

The Bariatric Beat at Regional West

February 2026



Upcoming Events:

In-Person Support Group
March 4, 2026
5:30 to 6:30 p.m.
Regional West Medical Plaza South, Conference Room 1

Resistance Training for Metabolic Protection

In-Person Support Group
April 1, 2026
5:30 to 6:30 p.m.
Regional West Medical Plaza South, Conference Room 1

The Truth About Long-Term Bariatric Lifestyle

Special Announcements

Introducing Our Wednesday Support Group

Embark on this exciting journey with our support group, scheduled for the first Wednesday of every month. Join us as we build a supportive network to celebrate successes and navigate challenges together.

Education Seminar

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SCAN ME

Success Stories

"My journey with obesity included many struggles before I understood it as a complex, chronic disease. Starting with a BMI over 35 and weighing 245 pounds, I focused on quick results and lacked self-compassion. Pursuing an Obesity Medicine certification changed my perspective, revealing the importance of medical management, support, and education beyond surgery. Today, with BMI of 22 and weight of 132 pounds, I lead by example supporting patients with realistic goals and ongoing compassion throughout their lifelong journey."
- Amber Schulze, MSN, APRN, FNP-C, Bariatric Coordinator





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The Bariatric Beat at Regional West

Ask the Expert

Understanding Body Image After Weight Loss

In this month's support group, we explored the article "Beyond the Looking Glass: An Honest View of Body Dysmorphic Disorder" by Merrill Little Berry and discussed how body image can continue to evolve long after bariatric surgery or during medical weight management. One of the most important lessons was recognizing that weight loss changes the body, but it does not automatically change how we see ourselves. Many individuals expect confidence and satisfaction to come naturally once the weight is gone, yet it is common to still notice perceived flaws, struggle with excess skin, or feel disconnected from a rapidly changing body.

We learned that there is a difference between normal body dissatisfaction and Body Dysmorphic Disorder (BDD). Occasional frustration with appearance is common, but persistent distress, obsessive focus on specific body parts, or avoiding social situations due to appearance concerns may signal a need for additional support. According to the American Society for Metabolic and Bariatric Surgery (ASMBS) and behavioral health guidance, emotional adjustment is a normal and ongoing part of the journey.

Participants shared that healing includes learning body acceptance, practicing patience, and redefining success beyond the number on the scale. Health improvements, increased mobility, and confidence in daily life are meaningful victories. Most importantly, we were reminded that this process is not about achieving a "perfect" body, but about learning to live in and care for the one we have with compassion and respect.

Warmest regards,
Amber Schulze, MSN, APRN, FNP-C, Bariatric Coordinator



Health Tips

Five Helpful Tips to Stay Motivated

1. Focus on health gains, not just appearance changes.
2. Limit comparison to others. Every journey is different.
3. Wear clothes that fit your current body comfortably.
4. Talk kindly to yourself, especially on hard days.
5. Reach out for support if negative thoughts feel overwhelming.

Dietitian's Corner by Amber

Chocolate Chia Pudding



- 3/4 c. Oikos Triple Zero Vanilla Greek Yogurt (or any low-fat and low-sugar Greek yogurt)
- 1 tbsp. Bariatric Fusion Chocolate High Protein Meal Replacement or any chocolate high protein meal replacement powder
- 1 tbsp. chia seeds
- 1/4 c. chocolate almond milk, unsweetened

In a blender, add the Greek yogurt, protein powder, chia seeds, and almond milk. Pour the pudding into a mason jar or small glass container. Enjoy immediately, or set the pudding in the fridge for about 10 minutes to firm up.

Nutrition Information
Serving Size: 1 serving, Calories: 208, Fat: 5g, Carbs: 17g, Fiber: 7g, Sugar: 4g, Protein: 24g

The Bariatric Beat at Regional West

March 2026



Special Announcements

Introducing Our Wednesday Support Group

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Education Seminar

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SCAN ME

Success Stories

Congratulations to Jamie Green, our newest member of the 100 lbs. down club! Jamie achieved her amazing weight loss through SADI-S surgery. We are so proud of the work she has done and continues to do! Well done, Jamie. If you'd like to join Jamie on the path to weight loss, call our clinic at 308-632-2872.



Upcoming Events:

In-Person Support Group
April 1, 2026
5:30 to 6:30 p.m.
Regional West Medical Plaza South, Conference Room 1

The Truth About Long-Term Bariatric Lifestyle

In-Person Support Group
May 6, 2026
5:30 to 6:30 p.m.
Regional West Medical Plaza South, Conference Room 1

Neurology of Craving Dopamine Cycles and Behavioral Reinforcement

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The Bariatric Beat at Regional West

Ask the Expert

Strength for Life: Building Muscle for Lasting Bariatric Success

This month's bariatric support group explored the powerful role strength training plays in long-term weight management. Using insights from the article "Pick Up the Weights and Get Off the Treadmill for Faster Results" by Roger E. Adams, participants discussed why building and maintaining muscle is essential after bariatric surgery.

Many people assume cardio is the most important exercise for weight loss. While activities like walking or treadmill workouts are excellent for heart health, strength training offers unique metabolic benefits. Resistance exercises help preserve lean muscle mass, which can decline during rapid weight loss after surgery. Maintaining muscle supports metabolism, improves strength for daily activities, and helps patients sustain long-term weight loss success.

Guidelines from the American Society for Metabolic and Bariatric Surgery emphasize the importance of regular physical activity that includes both aerobic exercise and resistance training. During the discussion, patients shared their own experiences with exercise, barriers they face, and creative ways they incorporate strength training into daily routines.

The biggest takeaway from the group was that exercise does not need to be extreme to be effective. Small, consistent efforts such as using resistance bands, bodyweight exercises, or light weights; can build strength, support metabolism, and improve overall health. Strength training is not just about building muscle; it is about building a stronger, healthier life after bariatric surgery.

Warmest regards,
Amber Schulze, MSN, APRN, FNP-C, Bariatric Coordinator



Health Tips

Strength Training After Bariatric Surgery

1. Start small. Begin with light resistance or bodyweight exercises two to three times per week.
2. Focus on form. Proper technique prevents injury and makes exercises more effective.
3. Combine cardio and strength. Walking, biking, or swimming, paired with resistance training, provide balanced benefits.
4. Be consistent. Short, regular workouts are more effective than occasional intense sessions.
5. Celebrate strength gains. Notice improvements in energy, balance, and daily activities — not just the number on the scale.

Dietitian's Corner by Amber

Warm Berry Compote with Yogurt



- 1½ c. frozen or fresh berries, such as blueberries, strawberries or mixed berries
- ¼ tsp. ground cinnamon
- 1 tsp. honey or maple syrup, optional
- 1 c. plain Greek yogurt or unsweetened plant-based yogurt

Add berries and cinnamon to a small saucepan over medium heat. Cook for eight to 10 minutes, stirring occasionally, until berries soften and release juices. Stir in honey or maple syrup, if using. Spoon warm berries over yogurt and serve immediately.

The Bariatric Beat at Regional West

May 2026



Upcoming Events:

In-Person Support Group
May 6, 2026
5:30 to 6:30 p.m.
Regional West Medical Plaza South, Conference Room 1

Neurology of Craving Dopamine Cycles and Behavioral Reinforcement

In-Person Support Group
June 3, 2026
5:30 to 6:30 p.m.
Regional West Medical Plaza South, Conference Room 1

Socialization Without Food

Special Announcements

Wednesday Support Group

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Education Seminar

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SCAN ME

Success Stories

We're celebrating Colleen Franklin, our newest member of the 100 lbs. down club! After her sleeve gastrectomy, Colleen has managed to lose 100 lbs. and counting through dedication, determination, and hard work. You are an inspiration, Colleen, and we are so proud to be on this journey with you!



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The Bariatric Beat at Regional West

Ask the Expert

Listening to Your Tool

This month's bariatric support group focused on a powerful but often overlooked concept: your surgery is a tool, and your body is constantly communicating how well you are using it. Many participants shared real-life experiences navigating life after surgery, including moments of success, frustration, and learning. A key takeaway was understanding that symptoms such as vomiting, food intolerance, dumping syndrome, and plugging are not failures; they are signals. These "alarm signs" often occur when eating too quickly, not chewing thoroughly, introducing foods too aggressively, or eating beyond fullness.

We discussed how these experiences can be normal, especially when trying new foods, but become concerning when they are frequent or ignored. Recognizing patterns is critical. The group also explored how maladaptive behaviors—such as drinking high-calorie liquids, grazing on slider foods, or eating until discomfort—can quietly stall progress or lead to regaining weight. Awareness is the first step toward change.

Equally important was the reminder that long-term success requires patience and consistency. Weight loss is not always linear, and plateaus are a normal part of the journey. Those who succeed are not perfect; they are persistent. They learn from their body's feedback and adjust accordingly.

The most meaningful insight shared was this: your body is not working against you. It is working for you. When you slow down, stay mindful, and respond to those internal cues, you strengthen your ability to succeed long-term.

Warmest regards,
Amber Schulze, MSN, APRN, FNP-C, Bariatric Coordinator



Health Tips

Listen to Your Tool

1. Slow down your meals. Take small bites, chew thoroughly, and allow time for your body to signal fullness.
2. Respect early warning signs. Symptoms like dumping or vomiting are feedback. Pause and reflect on what triggered them.
3. Avoid slider foods and liquid calories. These can bypass restriction and increase caloric intake without satiety.
4. Stick to a consistent eating schedule. Avoid long gaps without eating to prevent overeating later.
5. Adjust and don't ignore patterns. If symptoms or habits repeat, it's time to make a change, not push through it.

Dietitian's Corner by Amber

Omega 3 Salmon and Farro Winter Salad



- ½ c. dry farro
- 8 oz. salmon filet
- 1 Tbsp. olive oil
- 2 c. arugula or mixed greens
- 1 Tbsp. lemon juice
- ¼ tsp. salt
- Black pepper to taste

Cook farro according to package directions. Drain and set aside. Heat olive oil in a skillet over medium heat. Season salmon with salt and pepper and cook three to four minutes per side until just cooked through. Flake salmon into large pieces. Combine warm farro, greens, and salmon. Drizzle with lemon juice and toss gently.

Nutrition highlight: Salmon provides omega-3 fats that support skin barrier function, while farro contributes fiber and steady energy during winter months.

The Bariatric Beat at Regional West

June 2026



Upcoming Events:

In-Person Support Group
July 1, 2026
5:30 to 6:30 p.m.
Regional West Medical Plaza South, Conference Room 1

Emphasizing Summer Survival Kits, Protein-First Strategies, and Preventing Dehydration

Special Announcements

Education Seminar

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SCAN ME

Successes and Program Updates

Attending the American Society for Metabolic and Bariatric Surgery (ASMBS) 2026 Annual Conference and Bariatric Coordinator Program Development Course reinforced what makes Regional West's bariatric program exceptional. During a session with representatives from approximately 400 bariatric centers, I was recognized among a small group of coordinators whose programs demonstrated advanced capabilities and strong compliance with Metabolic and Bariatric Surgery Accreditation and Quality Improvement Program (MBSAQIP) standards. This experience highlighted the impact of Jason LaTowsky, MD's leadership. His vision, commitment to quality, and support of program development have helped position Regional West as a leader in bariatric care. Our recent MBSAQIP reaccreditation reflects the high standards he has helped establish and maintain for our patients and community.

Coordinator's Corner

Challenge yourself this month to plan one "Date Without the Plate." Whether it's with a spouse, friend, child, family member, or simply yourself, focus on creating a memory rather than a meal. You may be surprised how fulfilling the experience can be.

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The Bariatric Beat at Regional West

Ask the Expert

Creating Memories Without the Menu

During our support group discussion around Nina Crowley's article "Creative Dates Without the Plate," participants explored how food has traditionally played a role in social activities, celebrations, and relationships. We discussed the challenges many bariatric patients face when navigating social situations after surgery and how shifting the focus away from food can help support healthy habits and weight loss goals.

The group shared creative ideas for spending time with loved ones, including hiking, attending community events, game nights, sporting events, volunteering, crafting, and exploring new hobbies. We also discussed how food is often used as a reward and identified alternative ways to celebrate accomplishments that support overall wellness.

One key takeaway was that meaningful connections come from shared experiences rather than shared meals. By intentionally creating non-food-centered traditions, patients can strengthen relationships while supporting their long-term bariatric success.

"The best memories are not about what was on the table - they're about who was about who was around it."

Warmest regards,
Amber Schulze, MSN, APRN, FNP-C, CBC, Bariatric Coordinator



Health Tips

Creative Dates Without the Plate

1. Plan Active Adventures: Take a walk, hike, bike ride, or explore a local park.
2. Focus on the Experience: Make conversation, laughter, and connection the priority instead of the meal.
3. Create New Traditions: Try game nights, movie nights, crafting, volunteering, or family outings.
4. Reward Yourself Differently: Celebrate milestones with experiences, self-care, books, flowers, or fitness gear instead of food.
5. Schedule Fun Activities: Put non-food-centered activities on your calendar to help create lasting healthy habits.

Dietitian's Corner by Amber

Baked Protein Oatmeal



- 1 c. rolled oats
- 2 scoops Vanilla High Protein Meal Replacement Powder
- 1 ½ c. unsweetened almond milk
- 1 tsp. vanilla extract
- ¼ c. blueberries
- 1 Tbsp. natural peanut butter

Preheat oven to 375°F and spray an eight-inch baking dish with cooking spray. Mix all ingredients in a bowl until well combined. Pour mixture into the baking dish and spread evenly. Bake for 30 to 40 minutes or until set. Let cool, portion out, and enjoy.

Nutrition information: Serving Size: ½ bowl, Calories: 306, Fat: 5g, Carbs: 39g, Fiber: 7g, Sugar: 4g, Protein: 21g
Recipe courtesy of Bariatric Fusion

The Bariatric Beat at Regional West

July 2026



Special Announcements

Education Seminar

You can discover all you need to know about stapling bariatric procedures through our free education seminar. Scan the QR code at the bottom of this page or visit RWMCWeightLossOptions.com to register.

SCAN ME

Successes and Program Updates

Congratulations to Cassandra Coyle and Sophia Ozuna-Perez, the newest members of the 100 lbs. down club! Cassandra and Sophia achieved their incredible weight losses following gastric sleeve surgery and gastric bypass surgery, respectively. We are so proud of their hard work and determination on this journey.



Upcoming Events:

In-Person Support Group

Aug. 5, 2026
5:30 to 6:30 p.m.
Regional West Medical Plaza South, Conference Room 1

Help Identify Emotional Triggers and Build Coping Skills That Don't Rely on Food

Sept. 2, 2026
5:30 to 6:30 p.m.
Regional West Medical Plaza South, Conference Room 1

Focus on Labs, Blood Pressure, Diabetes Management, and How Bariatric Surgery Improves Chronic Disease

Coordinator's Corner

This month, challenge yourself to complete the Healthy Summer Five each day:

- Drink at least 64 ounces of sugar-free fluids.
- Eat protein first at every meal.
- Complete 30 minutes of physical activity.
- Take your bariatric vitamins as prescribed.
- Spend 10 minutes outdoors enjoying an active lifestyle.

Keep track of your progress throughout the month and celebrate every day you complete all five goals. Small, consistent actions lead to lasting success.

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The Bariatric Beat at Regional West

Ask the Expert

Creating Memories Without the Menu

This month's support group focused on making healthy choices while enjoying everything summer has to offer. Whether you're traveling, attending family reunions, hosting backyard barbecues, or spending time outdoors, your bariatric journey doesn't take a vacation.

Together, we discussed practical strategies from "Staying Healthy During Sumer Adventures" by Leslie Sedon. Participants learned the importance of staying hydrated by sipping fluids consistently throughout the day, recognizing the early signs of dehydration, planning ahead with protein-rich snacks, packing bariatric vitamins and medications while traveling, and maintaining healthy routines even when schedules change. We also explored mindful eating at social gatherings, emphasizing protein first, slowing down during meals, and focusing on making memories rather than letting food become the center of every celebration.

One of the most meaningful discussions centered on planning instead of striving for perfection. Success after bariatric surgery comes from consistency, preparation, and returning to healthy habits after occasional setbacks. Summer is an opportunity to stay active through walking, swimming, hiking, gardening, or simply enjoying time with family outdoors.

Remember, every health choice, no matter how small, supports your long-term success. Celebrate your victories, learn from your challenges, and continue building lifelong habits that help you live your healthiest life.

Warmest regards,
Amber Schulze, MSN, APRN, FNP-C, CBC, Bariatric Coordinator



Health Tips

Five Healthy Summer Tips

1. Carry a refillable water bottle and sip throughout the day.
2. Pack high-protein snacks before leaving home.
3. Eat protein first at cookouts and social gatherings.
4. Stay active with enjoyable outdoor activities like walking or swimming.
5. Continue taking your bariatric vitamins and medications, even while traveling.

Dietitian's Corner by Amber

High-Protein Whipped Ricotta with Honey Drizzle



- 15 oz. light ricotta cheese (part-skim, reduced fat)
- 1 scoop unflavored protein powder
- 2 Tbsp. honey

Add light ricotta cheese and unflavored protein powder to a mixing bowl. Whip for two minutes, scraping down the sides as needed, until light, smooth, and fully combined with no lumps of protein powder remaining. Spoon the whipped ricotta into a serving bowl and smooth the top. Drizzle honey generously over the top just before serving. Serve with fresh fruit, crackers, or a toasted baguette for a quick high-protein snack or dessert.

Nutrition information: Serving Size: ¼ of recipe, Calories: 160, Fat: 4.5g, Carbs: 14g, Fiber: 0g, Sugar: 9g, Protein: 15.5g
Recipe courtesy of Bariatric Fusion

The Bariatric Beat at Regional West

August 2026



Special Announcements

Education Seminar

You can discover all you need to know about stapling bariatric procedures through our free education seminar. Scan the QR code at the bottom of this page or visit RWMCWeightLossOptions.com to register.

SCAN ME



Successes and Program Updates

Regional West Bariatric Coordinator Amber Schulze was recently appointed to the American Society for Metabolic and Bariatric Surgery (ASMBS) Integrated Health Bariatric Coordinator Committee, supporting collaboration and excellence in bariatric care nationwide. This is a two-year commitment.

Well done, Amber!

Upcoming Events:

In-Person Support Group

Sept. 2, 2026
5:30 to 6:30 p.m.
Regional West Medical Plaza South, Conference Room 1

Focus on Labs, Blood Pressure, Diabetes Management, and How Bariatric Surgery Improves Chronic Disease

Oct. 7, 2026
5:30 to 6:30 p.m.
Regional West Medical Plaza South, Conference Room 1

Teaching Practical Anti-Craving Strategies, Sleep Hygiene, and Structured Eating Routines

Coordinator's Corner

Once a day before eating, ask yourself one simple question: "Am I physically hungry or emotionally hungry?"

No tracking. No judgement. No need to change what you eat. Just notice. The goal this month is awareness, not perfection. Keep track of your progress throughout the month and celebrate every day you complete all five goals. Small, consistent actions lead to lasting success.

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The Bariatric Beat at Regional West

Ask the Expert

Understanding Why We Eat

This month's support group explored "Comfort Foods: Why Do They Make Us Happy?" and the powerful connection between food, emotions, memories, and the brain's reward system. We discussed how comfort eating is not always driven by physical hunger. Stress, boredom, loneliness, celebration, fatigue, and even nostalgia can trigger the desire to eat.

Participants learned to recognize the difference between physical hunger and emotional hunger, identify personal triggers, and consider what they may need when a craving appears. Instead of focusing on restrictions, we discussed building additional coping strategies that do not rely solely on food.

One of our biggest takeaways was simple: food can satisfy physical hunger, but it cannot fix an emotion. Long-term bariatric success comes from increasing awareness, understanding our patterns, and practicing new responses one choice at a time.

Warmest regards,
Amber Schulze, MSN, APRN, FNP-C, CBC, Bariatric Coordinator



Health Tips

Five Tips for the Month

1. Pause before you eat. Ask yourself, "Am I physically hungry, or am I responding to an emotion?"
2. Learn your triggers. Notice when cravings occur and what happened immediately beforehand.
3. Use HALT. Ask yourself, "Am I Hungry, Angry, Lonely, or Tired?"
4. Build a non-food coping toolbox. Try walking, music, journaling, calling someone, prayer, exercise, or another activity you enjoy.
5. Skip the guilt. Get curious. If emotional eating happens, ask, "What triggered me, what did I need, and what could I try next time?"

Dietitian's Corner by Amber

Chili Lime Salmon Skewers



- 1 lb. salmon, cut into cubes
- 1 red bell pepper, cut into chunks
- 1 zucchini, sliced into thick rounds
- Juice of 1 lime
- 1 Tbsp. olive oil
- 1 tsp. chili powder
- Salt and pepper
- Wooden or metal skewers

Preheat the grill to medium heat. In a bowl, toss salmon and vegetables with olive oil, lime juice, chili powder, salt, and pepper. Thread salmon and vegetables onto skewers. Grill for eight to 10 minutes, turning halfway through, until salmon flakes easily.

The Bariatric Beat at Regional West

September 2026



Upcoming Events:

In-Person Support Group

Oct. 7, 2026
5:30 to 6:30 p.m.
Regional West Medical Plaza South, Conference Room 1

Teaching Practical Anti-Craving Strategies, Sleep Hygiene, and Structured Eating Routines

Nov. 4, 2026
5:30 to 6:30 p.m.
Regional West Medical Plaza South, Conference Room 1

Equipping People with Realistic Holiday Strategies and Gratitude-Based Mindset Reinforcement

Special Announcements

Education Seminar

You can discover all you need to know about stapling bariatric procedures through our free education seminar. Scan the QR code or visit RWMCWeightLossOptions.com to register.

SCAN ME



Successes and Program Updates

Please welcome Robert McNeill and Kacie Foelschow to the 100 lbs. Down club! Since starting medical weight management, Robert has lost 100 lbs. and counting. Kacie has made remarkable progress following gastric sleeve surgery. Thank you both for letting us be part of your tremendous achievements! We're here to support you every step of the way.

Coordinator's Corner

Pick one of the five foundations from the Health Tips and set one small, measurable goal for the next 30 days. A few ideas to get you started:

- Carry your water bottle to work
- Plan tomorrow's protein the night before
- Walk for 10 minutes three times this week
- Move your bedtime routine up 30 minutes
- Set a reminder for your prescribed vitamins
- Schedule that overdue bariatric or medical follow-up

Small, consistent steps build the foundation for lasting change. You don't have to fix everything at once.

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The Bariatric Beat at Regional West

Ask the Expert

This month's support group focused on obesity as a complex, chronic disease, not simply a matter of willpower or personal choices. We discussed how excess fat tissue affects multiple systems throughout the body, which is why obesity is so closely connected to conditions like type 2 diabetes, high blood pressure, heart disease, acid reflux, polycystic ovary syndrome (PCOS), and fatty liver disease. Genetics, environment, behavior, hormones, and other health conditions can all play a role, and much of that is outside anyone's direct control.

A central theme of the evening was shifting away from measuring success only by the number on the scale. Participants shared meaningful non-scale victories, including better blood pressure readings, improved sleep, more energy, easier mobility, and better blood glucose control. We introduced five foundational areas for long term health: hydration, meal planning and food quality, movement, sleep, and medication and vitamin monitoring. Rather than trying to overhaul everything at once, the group practiced choosing just one or two realistic behaviors to focus on.

We closed by asking each participant to privately identify one area they want to work on, one barrier that might get in the way, and one strategy to use when that barrier shows up. The takeaway for the month: progress is measured in health and function, not only in pounds lost.

Warmest regards,
Amber Schulze, MSN, APRN, FNP-C, CBC, Bariatric Coordinator



Health Tips

Five Foundations for Managing Obesity-Related Disease

1. Hydration — Getting enough fluids supports normal body function. Try carrying a water bottle as a simple daily reminder.
2. Meal Planning and Food Quality — Plan ahead for lean protein, vegetables, and fruit so you're not deciding what to eat while hungry, tired, or stressed.
3. Movement — Let go of the "exercise" mindset. Walking, gardening, dancing, and housework all count toward better health.
4. Sleep — A consistent sleep routine supports both metabolic health and better food choices the next day.
5. Medications, Vitamins, and Monitoring — Review your medications and vitamins regularly with your care team, and keep an eye on markers like blood pressure, A1C, and labs. They often tell you more than the scale does.

Dietitian's Corner by Amber

Greek Chicken Bowls



- 1 lb. boneless, skinless chicken breast
- 1 Tbsp. olive oil
- 1 tsp. garlic powder
- 1 tsp. dried oregano
- 2 c. cooked brown rice
- 2 c. chopped cucumbers
- 2 c. halved cherry tomatoes
- ½ c. crumbled feta cheese
- ¼ c. tzatziki
- Salt and pepper, to taste

Season the chicken with olive oil, garlic powder, oregano, salt, and pepper. Grill or sauté for about six to seven minutes per side, until cooked through. Slice into strips. Divide the rice among four bowls. Top with chicken, cucumbers, tomatoes, feta, and a spoonful of tzatziki. Serves four with approximately 35 grams of protein per serving.

The Bariatric Beat at Regional West

October 2026



Special Announcements

Education Seminar

You can discover all you need to know about stapling bariatric procedures through our free education seminar. Scan the QR code or visit RWMCWeightLossOptions.com to register.

SCAN ME

Successes and Program Updates



We're excited to congratulate Darren West, Courtney Pilger, and Debra Grant on losing 100 lbs. and counting. Debra and Darren achieved incredible weight loss through lap band procedures, and Courtney has earned a new lifestyle through gastric sleeve surgery. We are proud of the work these three have done and continue to do. Great job!

Upcoming Events:

In-Person Support Group

Nov. 4, 2026
5:30 to 6:30 p.m.
Regional West Medical Plaza South, Conference Room 1

Equipping People with Realistic Holiday Strategies and Gratitude-Based Mindset Reinforcement

Dec. 2, 2026
5:30 to 6:30 p.m.
Regional West Medical Plaza South, Conference Room 1

Reviewing 2026, Patient Successes, and Reinforcing the Value of Ongoing Support Engagement

Coordinator's Corner

This month, become curious about your nighttime eating patterns instead of judging them. Your Challenge: For seven evenings, practice these five steps:

1. Record the time: When does your nighttime craving appear?
2. Rate your hunger: Use a scale of one to 10, with one being not hungry and 10 being extremely hungry.
3. Identify your trigger: Are you experiencing stress, boredom, fatigue, habit, or physical hunger?
4. Review your day: Did you eat adequate protein, follow your meal plan, stay hydrated, and get enough sleep?

Your SMART Goal: Over the next seven days, track nighttime cravings on at least five evenings, identify one recurring trigger, and practice one healthier response.

Success isn't measured by having zero cravings. It's measured by understanding your behaviors and making intentional choices.

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The Bariatric Beat at Regional West

Ask the Expert

When the Kitchen Calls After Dark

At our October Bariatric Support Group, we explored an important question: **Why do cravings seem stronger at night?**

Using Kate Rivard's *Late Night Food Cravings* as our educational foundation, we discussed three important influences on nighttime eating: physical hunger versus emotional cravings, the effects of sleep and stress, and how our daytime nutrition choices influence evening hunger.

We learned that not every craving means our bodies need food. Sometimes we eat because we're tired, stressed, bored, or following familiar routines. Other times, inadequate nutrition throughout the day leaves us genuinely hungry at night.

One important takeaway was learning to pause and identify what our bodies are communicating rather than responding automatically.

For bariatric patients, understanding these patterns is an important part of long-term weight management. Surgery is a powerful treatment, but continued education, self-awareness, and support help us navigate life beyond surgery.

You don't have to navigate these challenges alone!

Join us at our monthly Bariatric Support Group, held the **first Wednesday of every month from 5:30 to 6:30 p.m.** Whether you're preparing for surgery, newly post-operative, or years into your journey, your experiences and questions matter. Everyone is welcome. Come learn, connect, and grow with us!

Remember: Progress begins with awareness, not perfection. Every time you pause to understand a craving, you're building a healthier relationship with food.

Warmest regards,
Amber Schulze, MSN, APRN, FNP-C, CBC, Bariatric Coordinator



Health Tips

Five Foundations for Managing Obesity-Related Disease

1. Fuel your body throughout the day — Skipping meals or eating too little protein can contribute to evening hunger. Follow your bariatric meal plan, prioritize protein, and avoid saving most of your food for nighttime.
2. Pause before you snack — Ask yourself: "Am I physically hungry, emotionally overwhelmed, bored, or simply following a routine?" Identifying the reason behind a craving helps you choose your next step.
3. Create a new evening routine — Replace automatic snacking with a relaxing activity, such as reading, stretching, journaling, or taking a short walk. Building new routines can help break the connection between nighttime and unnecessary eating.
4. Protect your sleep — Inadequate sleep can increase hunger and food cravings. Develop a consistent bedtime routine, limit evening screen time, and address ongoing sleep difficulties.
5. Plan, don't graze – If you are genuinely hungry, choose a planned, protein-focused snack appropriate for your bariatric diet stage. Eat mindfully rather than repeatedly grazing throughout the evening.

Dietitian's Corner by Amber

Cinnamon-Spiced Apple Crisp with Oats

- 2 large apples, peeled, cored, and sliced
- 1 Tbsp. lemon juice
- ½ tsp. cinnamon

Topping:

- ½ c. rolled oats
- 1 Tbsp. chopped nuts (walnuts or almonds)
- 1 tsp. maple syrup or honey
- Pinch of cinnamon



Preheat your oven to 350 F. Toss apples with lemon juice and cinnamon; place in a small baking dish. Mix oats, nuts, sweetener, and cinnamon in a bowl. Sprinkle over apples. Bake for 20 to 25 minutes, until apples are soft and topping is golden.