



WESTERN PENNSYLVANIA BARIATRIC INSTITUTE

Patient Spotlight.....2

Healthy Recipe.....3

What's the Buzz with Bariatrics.....4

Upcoming Events.....4



Welcome to the first newsletter of the Western Pennsylvania Bariatric Institute! I want to take this opportunity to tell you a little about myself professionally and personally. My name is D'Arcy Duke, MD, Chief of General Surgery at

Conemaugh Memorial Medical Center and Director of the Western Pennsylvania Bariatric Institute. I am board certified in general surgery and have a focused practice designation from the American Board of Surgery in Bariatric Surgery. I have performed surgery and have been a member of the teaching faculty at Conemaugh for 23 years.

I was born and raised in Johnstown. I have a younger sister. I met my husband in kindergarten but didn't marry him until 30 years later. I am an intense college football fan (WE ARE!) and love to wear crazy patterned caps and socks with my scrubs when I am performing surgery.

It has been my greatest honor and pleasure to serve this community. I work with the most talented, warm, and dedicated team at Western Pennsylvania Bariatric Institute and am grateful to have the opportunity to change the lives of so many. We hope you enjoy our first newsletter and look forward to helping you achieve your health goals.

D'Arcy Duke, MD

Patient Spotlight

When it comes to weight loss, **Kim Washington** feels like she has “climbed to the mountain top and can see where I came from and where I need to go to stay healthy.”

At nearly 270 pounds and a size 24 before undergoing a bariatric “sleeve” operation, the 57-year-old Johnstown resident was taking two blood pressure medications and a cholesterol pill daily. Now, four years after the operation by Conemaugh surgeon Dr. D’Arcy Duke, she weighs about 175 pounds, wears a size 14 dress and “I’m off the meds and my blood pressure is perfect,” she said. “And I aim to keep it that way.”

After struggling with weight for most of her adult life, Kim noticed a friend who lost weight and looked great. “I said, ‘Hey girl, what’s your secret,’” said Washington, who is a nurse’s aide at the Conemaugh system’s Crichton Center.

“She told me about her weight-loss surgery. I took it to heart, contacted Conemaugh’s weight-management center, and began a great journey.” Having the bariatric sleeve operation “was the best decision I’ve ever made,” Washington said.

“I’m no longer tired all the time. I have a lot more energy and confidence. I’m able to get out and around so much more,” said the mother of four and grandmother of 11. “There’s a lot less pressure on my back and knees. I can ride bikes with my grandkids and do so much more. I really feel like a new person.

“The only downfall is I have to spend a lot of money on new clothes,” she said with a laugh. “But that’s great.”

Some people claim weight-loss surgery is the easy way out. “But they’re mistaken. It’s not a quick fix. It’s not once and done,” she said. “I did this to improve my health and extend my life. I love the person I’ve become.”

After the surgery by Dr. Duke, “a whole new world opened to me. But the surgery is just the beginning. You need a dedicated, positive mindset. It takes a massive lifestyle change. You must make the right choices or else you risk slipping into old habits and the weight will creep back on. Keep a positive attitude and never ever give up.” According to Kim, Dr. Duke and her team “were amazing in preparing me – physically and mentally – for the operation. They answered every question and concern that I had. They made me feel very comfortable and provided great support.”

Kim’s glowing attitude, determination and commitment “are keys to her excellent post-operation success,” Dr. Duke said. “Her energy, enthusiasm and mental toughness are inspirational to other patients.” Kim recognizes that many overweight people encounter long, lonely struggles before deciding to change their lives and lifestyles – whether it be through a bariatric operations or medical/non-surgical treatment. “My advice is not to be afraid to seek help. Go to support meetings at Conemaugh’s weight-management office. Talk with the people who’ve beat it and learn from them. They’ve been where you are now.” Her goal this year is to get back into a size 12 dress and to hike the famous “Thousand Steps” in Huntington County.

“I feel like I’ve already climbed one mountain,” she said. “And I want to climb this one just for the fun of it. As a celebration of how far I’ve come.”



Kim Washington

Healthy Recipe

Balsamic Chicken

THIS RECIPE MAKES 4 SERVINGS



INGREDIENTS

- 1 large onion(s), yellow thinly sliced
- 2 large pepper(s), red, bell sliced
- 4 clove(s) garlic minced (may substitute 1 teaspoon garlic powder)
- 1/4 teaspoon pepper, red flakes (or to taste)
- 4 piece(s) chicken, breast, boneless, skinless medium-thin (may substitute 8 chicken tenders)
- 1/4 teaspoon salt, Kosher
- 1/4 teaspoon pepper, black ground
- 1/3 cup(s) vinegar, balsamic (use a good-quality, aged variety if possible)
- 1 can(s) tomatoes, diced (15-ounce) well drained, preferably no salt added

PREPARATION

Liberally coat a large sauté pan with oil spray and preheat the pan over medium-high heat. Add the onion and bell pepper and sauté for 5 minutes, or until the vegetables begin to soften. Add additional oil spray or a tablespoon of water if the vegetables start to stick to the bottom of the skillet.

Add the garlic (or garlic powder) and red pepper flakes and sauté for 1 minute, stirring constantly. Season the chicken breasts with the salt and pepper. Add the chicken breasts to the pan and cook for 4 minutes on each side.

Add the balsamic vinegar and canned tomatoes and bring the liquids to a boil. Reduce the heat to medium-low, and simmer uncovered for 25 minutes, stirring occasionally. Season with additional salt and pepper to taste.

What's the Buzz with Bariatrics?

Bariatric surgery is a medical procedure designed to assist individuals struggling with obesity in achieving significant and sustained weight loss. It works by altering the size of the stomach or the way food is absorbed, which can lead to improved overall health and a reduction in obesity-related conditions such as type 2 diabetes, high blood pressure, and sleep apnea. Many patients turn to bariatric surgery after other weight loss methods, such as diet and exercise, have not provided long-term success.

At Western Pennsylvania Bariatric Institute, we perform robotic-assisted bariatric surgery, a minimally invasive technique. This approach involves making small incisions and using specialized instruments, including a small camera, to perform the surgery. Compared to traditional open surgery, minimally invasive techniques typically result in smaller scars, less postoperative pain, a shorter hospital stay, and a faster recovery period. These benefits have made robotic-assisted minimally invasive bariatric procedures a preferred option for many patients and surgeons alike.

There are several types of bariatric procedures available, each designed to support weight loss in different ways. Sleeve gastrectomy involves removing approximately 80% of the stomach, leaving a smaller, sleeve-shaped stomach that restricts food intake and reduces hunger hormones. Roux-en-Y gastric bypass, commonly known as gastric bypass, creates a small stomach pouch and redirects the intestines to limit the amount of food that can be consumed and absorbed; this surgery can lead to significant weight loss and improvement in medical conditions such as diabetes. Some patients who have previously undergone an adjustable gastric band procedure may require adjustments, removal, or conversion to a different bariatric surgery. Revisional and conversion procedures are options for individuals who have had prior bariatric surgery but need modifications.

Bariatric surgery is not a one-size-fits-all solution, and determining the most appropriate procedure requires a thorough evaluation of an individual's medical history, weight loss goals, and overall health. It is important for patients to work closely with a qualified bariatric team to understand the risks, benefits, and lifestyle changes required for long-term success.

For those considering bariatric surgery, understanding the procedures and their effects is an important first step in making an informed decision about weight loss and overall health improvement.

April Information Sessions

Want to learn more about your options when it comes to weight loss? Attend one of our FREE Information Sessions!

Tuesday, April 1, 2025
Wednesday, April 9, 2025
Thursday, April 17, 2025
Friday, April 25, 2025

Call our office at
814.539.8725 to register!