

**“My surgeon and clinical staff were phenomenal and with me every step of the way.”**

**Michael Burns**

I'm a big guy and I have had weight problems most of my life. I always tried to take care of myself. I served in the Army National Guard and learned the importance of staying fit. Over the years, when I realized I was getting heavy, I'd get serious, go on a diet, workout at the gym, eat healthier foods to lose weight and take care of myself. But after a while I would slip back to my old ways.

It became clear that dieting wasn't working anymore. I was getting to be well above 300 pounds and developing serious health issues like high blood pressure and slipped discs in my back. It got to the point where my wife had to help me put my boots on in the morning so I could go to work. I knew I had to do something.

I investigated surgical options. I checked around the area to see what was available and finally attended a weight-loss information session for the Center for Weight Management and Weight Loss Surgery at Lawrence Memorial Hospital of Medford. I liked how I was treated there. They listened, answered my questions and I felt a good connection with the program. I was also very impressed with Andras Sandor, MD, the director of the program.

I tried dieting one last time, but when that was not successful Dr. Sandor and I talked about lap-band surgery as the best solution. I had the surgery in March 2012. The day after the surgery, I was up and walking around in my hospital room. I asked the medical team to take me off the pain medications since I was not feeling any discomfort. When I went home, I followed a liquid diet that reduced the number of calories I was taking in and then eventually switched to solid, healthy foods.

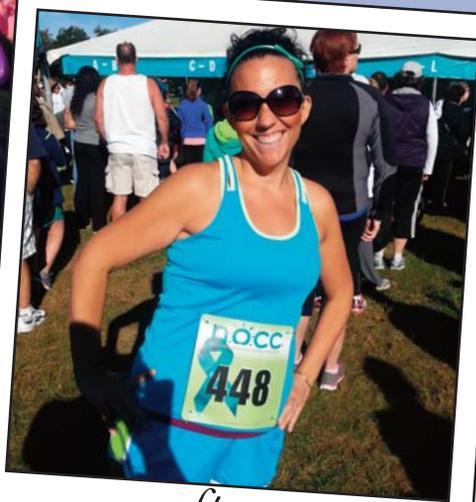
Now a year later, I am maintaining the weight loss and holding steady at 195 pounds. Hunger cravings are gone. I follow the diet, eat healthy foods religiously and get regular exercise. Since the surgery, keeping the weight off isn't hard at all. There are other advantages to losing the weight. I no longer take blood pressure or pain medications. Sleep apnea is gone and the two slipped discs I developed are non-existent now. I am even training and hoping to fulfill a dream I've had for years to run in the Boston Marathon.

I am glad I found the Center and Dr. Sandor. I believe I had an easy time with the surgery because of the great skill and experience of the entire team that cared for me. They are phenomenal and are with you every step of the way.

**“It is nice to feel like myself again.  
The Center gave me  
my life back”  
Megan McDonough**



*before*



*after*

Megan McDonough before surgery/When Stoneham resident Megan McDonough put on almost 100 pounds in a year it took a toll on her. She lost herself – her personality and confidence just faded away. Six months after gastric bypass surgery at the Hallmark Health System Center for Weight Management and Weight Loss Surgery McDonough is back and thankful to the team for her success.

“It’s still shocking,” McDonough, 32, said of her weight loss. “I have so much more energy. If it wasn’t for the Center’s team I wouldn’t be here and I wouldn’t be this happy.”

McDonough was against surgery at first, saying it seemed “extreme.” Still, she went to the Center’s information session and researched several other hospitals in the area. One day McDonough opened up her local newspaper and saw an article on Jennifer Lane, MD, one of the Center’s surgeons. She took it as a sign and decided to set up an appointment.

“The entire staff was extremely warm and welcoming and there was no judgment,” said McDonough. “Lawrence Memorial Hospital was the only hospital I felt comfortable with.”Megan McDonough after surgery

Since surgery, McDonough’s life has changed quite a bit. She has lost 100 pounds, has started dating again and is also hoping to run a 5K next year in honor of the one year anniversary of her surgery. McDonough said most importantly she is happy and confident again, something she lost with her weight again.

“Everyone says my personality is back to how it used to be,” she said. “It is nice to feel like myself again. The Center gave me my life back.”