



ActiveAmericans.com
THE BEACON OF FREEDOM



Get your taxes done... **FASTER** Bobby Labonte **TaxSlayer.com** Start for Free

Make AAC your homepage New Stuff

Join Rewards Invite a Friend Google Feedback About Us Login
Blogs Profiles Benefits Shoppers Guide Coupons Stocks Weather Charities

Congrats to todays \$100 a Day Winner Bill, Ames, IA

Large Font

Gastric Bypass Option

Baby Boomer Improves Health and Lifestyle

By Cheryl Warren



Over the past 20 years, Lillian Wieczorek of Hoffman Estates, Ill., tried every diet known to humans. Just two years ago, the five-foot-9-inch woman weighed over 300 pounds. Today, at the age of 58, she is happy to report that she weighs 199 pounds, has a goal of 180 pounds and no longer has to take the three asthma and two arthritis medications she had been taking for more than 10 years.

[Back to Top](#)

The life changing moment

Wieczorek says that although she was comfortable with herself and her weight, she knew it was unhealthy. "I knew the health risks because we have a family history of strokes. So I was always trying to get my weight down, but was never successful."

Wieczorek was working in the accounting department of a hospital outside of Chicago when a magazine article on gastric bypass surgery caught her attention. "This was truly the moment my life changed," says Wieczorek. "I had never considered this surgery until reading about the advances that had been made."

Intrigued, she immediately began doing research to find a physician in her area whom she felt had the credentials to successfully perform the surgery. "Everything I found during my research seemed to bring me back to Dr. Constantine Frantzides, who had been interviewed in the initial article I read on gastric bypass surgery," she says.

[Back to Top](#)

The support tree

Everything fell into place and just "seemed easier" once Wieczorek decided to make the call to Dr. Frantzides' office.

The process began by talking to the office manager, who had been through the surgery herself. "She related to me on a personal level," says Wieczorek. The two spoke in-depth about obesity and the pros and cons of the surgery. Wieczorek now uses her own personal experience to counsel other prospective patients.

Throughout the pre-surgery process, Wieczorek continued to educate herself through use of the Internet, and she found several Web sites where she could communicate with other people who had or were considering gastric bypass surgery.

After breaking the news to her family and friends, Wieczorek was amazed at the outpouring of support. "For me, the added attention – both positive and negative – was one of the most difficult things I had to overcome before and after the surgery. I had my share of naysayers – the people who see the glass only as half empty and send you articles on why you shouldn't have the surgery. You have to learn to appreciate and graciously accept both aspects from people. But if you do your own homework through research, understand the risks and find a reputable doctor that is what pays off in the end."

[Back to Top](#)

AAC Daily Hit Meter
62,953
Visit Daily

BOOST EMPLOYEE Morale.
GIVE AMERICAN EXPRESS® GIFT CARDS FOR BUSINESS
 ORDER NOW

- Partnership Web Sites**
[Adams Outdoor Advertising](#)
[Associated Press](#)
[Breitbart](#)
[Cleveland Clinic](#)
[CNBC](#)
[CNN](#)
[CNS News](#)
[Consumer Affairs](#)
[Custom Score Cards](#)
[David's Link for Seniors](#)
[Drudge Report](#)
[Epoch Times](#)
[ESPN](#)
[Fox News](#)
[Golf](#)
[Golf Buzz](#)
[Investment U](#)
[Jonathan Alter](#)
[Kiplinger 25](#)
[Local News by Zip Code](#)
[Medill Northwestern](#)

Psychological readiness

Wieczorek found that doctors don't perform this surgery hastily. In addition to a multitude of physical testing, an in-depth psychological evaluation -- including a written test and a personal interview -- also was administered.

"This process made me appreciate the importance of being mentally ready for the changes I was going to encounter -- such as eating habits, extra attention and the major anatomical changes that would occur. It helped put me in a much better mental state before and after the surgery. They made sure I could handle it, and if there were any concerns, they also offered counseling prior to and following surgery," Wieczorek explains.

[Back to Top](#)



The surgery, recovery and future

Wieczorek says the actual surgery was surprisingly easier than she expected. "There is always a risk with any surgery, especially those that involve anesthesia. My surgery was done using an advanced laparoscopic process instead of the open procedure, which reduced the invasiveness of the surgery. There was still a lot of healing needed, but I think I had much less pain -- at least less than I anticipated."

Wieczorek was able to return to her full-time office job in 2 1/2 weeks. "Everyone heals differently, so it's important to rely on the physician for guidance about recovery time and when to return to a normal routine."

According to Wieczorek, the real work begins after the surgery. "It takes resolve to face the fact that you must change your eating habits. You can no longer eat large, oversized portions like the ones that most of us baby boomers were raised on, like the ones that are served in most restaurants. It's possible to eat out, but you must restrict your intake."

Wieczorek explains that food intake is very limited for the first year or two, which is when most of the weight loss occurs. She is quick to add that there can be immediate negative repercussions due to overeating or eating something that doesn't agree with you. "I had a reaction only once -- because of a very rich soup. It's actually pretty easy to learn your limits," she says.

[Back to Top](#)

She also cites the unwritten "Sweet 16" rule -- avoid anything that has more than 16 grams of sugar. "I still have no desire for so many of the things I almost lived for previously, like candy, desserts and heavy foods."

Exercise is crucial, she says, and it becomes easier "as the pounds come off." Vitamins are a must, too.

"As I am nearing my second anniversary of the 'new' me, I am able to eat anything I want, which makes it more difficult. Some people can begin regaining weight at this point, because your body adjusts. The 'pouch' can gradually enlarge, enabling you to eat more and possibly fall back into old habits.

"I know I will always have to be regimented so I can maintain good health and hopefully live a longer and more enjoyable life," comments Wieczorek. "Although it is NOT magic or really even a cure, we are truly blessed that technology has advanced so much and we have this option available as a tool to help us improve our lives."

[Back to Top](#)

The true test of success

The "new" Wieczorek has witnessed many changes. Perhaps one of the most satisfying was when, shortly after her surgery, she discovered that she no longer needed to request a seat belt extension on airplanes, a request that she usually had to make.

"This was such a special moment for me. It's the little things I don't even think about that pop up and make me realize how amazing this surgery has been for me physically and mentally. Another milestone is the ability to walk and talk at the same time. A friend often comments on how heavily I used to breathe when I was walking, which is something that I had never realized," she says.

It's moments like these that serve as reminders to the 5-foot-9-inch, 199-pound woman, and help her to realize that she has overcome many obstacles and that she is, in fact, a success.

[MoneyMorning](#)

[Motley Fool](#)

[MSNBC](#)

[NY Times](#)

[Oak Clinic for MS](#)

[Oak Investments](#)

[Oprah](#)

[PGA Tour](#)

[Refdesk](#)

[Rivals](#)

[The Smart Profits Report](#)

[University of Louisville](#)

[USA Today](#)

[Wall Street Journal](#)

[Women's Health](#)

[Back to Top](#)

About the author:

Cheryl Warren is president of Cheryl Warren & Associates, LLC, where she works with a diverse group of clients including nonprofit organizations, radiation therapy billing companies, franchisors, inventors, physicians, medical supply distributors and Fortune 500 companies. She has more than 30 years of sales and marketing experience.

Copyright 2007 ActiveAmericans.com

(To the reader: For the benefit of all, please share your thoughts on this article or topic in the "Leave a Comment" box below.)

[Back to Top](#)

Leave a comment:

Rate this story

- Very Good
- Good
- Average
- Poor
- Very Poor

[Read All Comments](#)

[Submit Rating](#)

Click membership tab to join and submit comments

E-mail this article to a friend:

[Send](#)

Comments for Gastric Bypass Option

- **WOW!** That's just awesome! I love the photo of the two women in the pants, that's a good incentive for others to lose weight. (Dee Lacey, WA 2008-08-29)



Cruise specials for those 55 or older

One of the great perks of reaching age 55 is having... More

More Articles

- Mysterious fruits reverse aging, improve health
- Do you qualify for a credit card bailout?
- Health informatics professionals are in high demand
- How to view your credit report and scores for free

Advertising provided by: ARALifestyle.com

[Legal](#) [Contact](#) [Privacy](#) [Advertising](#) [Press Room](#) [Friends](#)

AANavbar

- [Home](#)
- [AAC Public Service](#)
 - ≥
 - [Active Service](#)
 - [Affinity Program](#)
 - [Children of Ubumi](#)
- [AAC Sports](#)
 - ≥
 - [Boomers](#)
 - [College Basketball](#)
 - [College Football](#)
 - [Golf](#)
 - [Hot Topics](#)
 - [Major League Baseball](#)
 - [Masters](#)
 - [NASCAR](#)
 - [National Basketball Assoc](#)
 - [National Football League](#)
 - [Seniors](#)
- [AAC Technology](#)
- [AAC Your Community](#)