



Health Options For Obesity

"The Gentler Surgery"™ and the metamorphosis of Sarah Fussy

By Sarah Fussy

A belief I've always held dear to my heart is that life is too short to waste having regrets. Why then did I put my life on hold for so many years, I've often ask myself? The first 24 years of my life were spent putting things on a list of 'things to do' once I lost the weight. When I think back on all the experiences I missed, and if I knew then, what I know now, I would have made the decision to have weight loss surgery much earlier.

My earliest memory of being overweight was at the age of 4 when a pediatrician scolded my mom during a physical that if she wasn't more careful she'd end up having an overweight child. Thus began my lifelong struggle with yo-yo dieting & emotional eating. When I was 6, I was diagnosed with familial hypercholesteremia-my cholesterol was over 400 thanks to genetics and my predilection for fried foods. Cholesterol medication and countless failed diets ensued. By the 3rd grade I was considered morbidly obese, and so it remained for the remainder of my elementary and high school days, which were painful to say the least. The comments from teachers, classmates, strangers, and even family members wrecked my self-esteem. I spent a lot of time devising excuses to 'miss the bus,' and stay home 'sick' to avoid being ridiculed at school. I never went to my senior prom, didn't participate in sports I enjoyed, and never went swimming in public beyond the 3rd grade. I was essentially a bookworm hermit.

Throwing myself into my studies to compensate for my weight got me accepted into pharmacy school, but that didn't change my feelings of inner torment. I took the longer

route around campus to get to class so that people wouldn't see me wheezing, sweating, and limping from knee pain. I couldn't fit into auditorium seats, avoided parties, and never experienced the joy of roller coasters or swimming in the ocean that my friends did on spring break. How in the world could I be smart enough to get into pharmacy school, get a nutrition minor, and know as much as I did about healthcare, and yet not figure out how to lose the weight for good? It was in my 2nd to last year of pharmacy school that I decided it was time to stop putting my life on hold.

I waddled to the computer center on campus late at night to research gastric bypass surgery, and came across Dr. Frantzides' impressive profile on obesityhelp.com. Even though I had to travel out of my home state to see him, having the best surgeon was more important to me than any distance. His office had me scheduled for a consultation within a month. I was nervous and had so many questions, but Dr. Frantzides and his staff put me completely at ease, answered every question, eased the insurance approval process, and



never once made me feel ashamed about my weight as previous doctors had. I felt safe in Dr. Frantzides capable hands, and went into surgery on June 3rd of 2003 weighing 285 pounds with a BMI of 51. Today, 5 years later and healthy, I've lost 135 pounds and have never looked back.

The recovery was amazingly fast. I was out of laparoscopic surgery in 45 minutes, out of the hospital in 2 days, and back to class in 2 weeks. I won't lie, I did experience pain post-operatively, but nothing unmanageable, and I still struggle on occasion with accepting my self-image & learning to deal with emotional eating, but I no longer have to 'wait until I lose the weight' to do anything. I fit in airplane and roller coaster seats, go out with friends to the beach, and am learning to erase the feelings of low self-esteem that were with me for so long. I thank Dr. Frantzides for giving me my life back and would recommend him and the surgery to anyone willing to put in the effort required post-operatively to ensure success of the surgery.



Constantine T. Frantzides
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Dr. Frantzides is the Director of the Chicago Institute of Minimally Invasive Surgery, Director of the Minimally Invasive Fellowship Program at St. Francis Hospital, and Professor of Surgery at Northwestern University. His experience in laparoscopic gastrointestinal surgery is one of the most extensive in the U.S.

He has traveled internationally to perform and teach laparoscopic operations. During the last 16 years, he has organized 31 laparoscopic courses through which 331 surgeons were trained in laparoscopic surgery, he has made more than 200 contributions to medical literature and has published 2 books on laparoscopic surgery. Dr. Frantzides has been the recipient of several awards and honors, as well as grants from the National Institutes of Health (NIH) and from the surgical industry. He is also credited with inventing two surgical instruments used in laparoscopic surgery. Because of his academic activities in laparoscopic surgery, as well as his surgical skills, he was given the "Achievement award for advanced laparoscopic surgery" by the American Society of General Surgery. See complete curriculum vitae for Dr. Frantzides at www.laparoscopicexperts.com.

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