



Joe Wynn before and after his gastric bypass surgery.

**HE WAS 33 YEARS OLD, WEIGHED 450 POUNDS, had a waistline over 60 inches, and was getting bigger by the day. No diet seemed to work. He stopped wanting to leave the house and became pretty miserable. "I wanted my life back," he says.**

The year was 2003—the year that Joe Wynn first learned about gastric bypass surgery, and began the journey that would see him get his life back, and more.

"Gastric bypass sounded more like a secret play for the New England Patriots than a life-saving operation," Wynn tells people today, when he looks back at that time.

He began following the progress of a good friend who'd had the surgery, and liked what he saw. He started to attend Weight Loss Surgery Support Group meetings at Baystate Medical Center in Springfield. This led to appointments with the team of expert surgeons and specially trained dietitians, psychologists, physicians, physician assistants, and nurses at the BMC Weight Loss Surgery Program.

Wynn had his own surgery in December of 2005. In the weeks leading up to the procedure, he lost 28 pounds as he began applying what he learned in the program. After the surgery, he lost 240 pounds more. Today, five years later, he weighs 216 pounds, has a 32-inch waist, and plays in a touch football league. He also continues to attend support group meetings, and believes, now more than ever, that these meetings are the key to his success.

"The surgery fixes your stomach, not your head," he tells others when he participates in support group sessions. "This is not the easy way out, no matter what anyone tells you."

## THINKING ABOUT GASTRIC BYPASS SURGERY?

For anyone thinking about gastric bypass surgery and wondering where to go for the procedure, Dr. Jay Kuhn suggests getting answers to the following questions:

- How experienced is the surgeon?
- Is the surgeon fellowship trained?
- Is the surgeon willing to talk with me, answering all my questions and exploring all my options?
- What's the quality of the entire weight loss program? Are they truly interested in me? Or just going through the motions leading to surgery?
- Do I have dietitians available to me postoperatively to make sure I'm losing the weight I want to lose and that I'm losing it safely?

In the 18 months after gastric bypass surgery, most people lose 55-60% of their excess body weight. Over the next two years, most usually regain 10% of that weight. For those who regain more weight than the average, the issue usually is that they have not been careful about what or how much they eat, or how much they exercise.

Dr. Jay Kuhn of Baystate Surgical Associates agrees with Joe's assessment that gastric bypass surgery is not the quick fix people might like it to be. "Any operation is a tool," he says, "that can be used wisely or poorly."

According to Kuhn, while studies show that those who have gastric bypass surgery live longer than seriously obese people who don't, the procedure has the potential for serious complications. That's why Baystate's Weight Loss Surgery Program has such an extensive prescreening process before the final decision is made.

"We actually have patients who lose a lot of weight without the surgery," Kuhn says. "We consider them our greatest successes."

For Joe Wynn, success has been measured not simply in the number of pounds lost, but in the determination he's found to live a healthy, active life. "For years I'd been held back from what I wanted to do," he says. "Not anymore. I took back my life. Now I am in control."

But while he feels in control, Wynn also feels he's had a lot of help. "Whoever I talk to, if they're thinking about gastric bypass surgery, I tell them to go to Baystate. Everyone there is so professional and so caring. And you'll find the best support system, which is something that you really want to have."

[For a referral to a bariatric surgeon on staff at Baystate Medical Center, please call 1-800-377-4325. For more information about the Baystate Weight Loss Surgery Program, call 413-794-7020 or visit \[baystatehealth.org/bsa\]\(http://baystatehealth.org/bsa\).](#)



### WATCH THIS!

Joe Wynn talks about his weight loss surgery experience at [baystatehealth.org/wls](http://baystatehealth.org/wls).

## COMING SOON TO GREENFIELD

Beginning in October 2010, Dr. Satish Muthavarapu will offer the laparoscopic banding procedure at Baystate Franklin Medical Center in Greenfield as part of their new Weight Loss Surgery Program. Dr. Muthavarapu completed a fellowship in minimally invasive and bariatric surgery at New York Hospital Medical Center of Queens.

**2 OUT OF 3 AMERICANS ARE OVERWEIGHT OR OBESE.**

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