



Which is the Answer: Gastric Bypass or Eating Correctly?

Dr. Charles Shaffer

Each week, individuals sign up for the Weigh Station with the intention to lose weight to qualify for gastric bypass surgery. Once they lose 50 to 80 pounds, they're eligible for their insurance to cover the surgery. Many of these individuals struggle to lose the necessary weight to have the surgery.

In all my years in bariatric medicine, I have failed to see the benefit of gastric bypass surgery for these patients. If they've already lost 50 pounds by changing their habits and eating correctly, why can they not continue?

The majority of people are not aware of the side effects of gastric bypass surgery. I often explain there is nothing wrong with their stomach, small intestines, pancreas, kidneys, and liver. In the end, even after the surgery, it all boils down to your eating habits.

WHAT YOU'LL FIND INSIDE:

- **WHICH IS THE ANSWER: GASTRIC BYPASS OR EATING CORRECTLY?**
- **THE RECIPE OF THE MONTH**



If you're unable to control your habits before the surgery, it's going to be difficult to make a sudden change post-surgery. Losing weight and keeping it is as much mental as it is physical.

At one point in time, the Weigh Station saw over 75 patients who had undergone gastric bypass stomach stapling. All of these patients gained their weight back and had developed side effects.

Complications of this surgery include fistula, leaking, peritonitis, electrolyte abnormalities, stomach ulcers, dumping syndrome, iron deficiency, B12 deficiency band erosion, and liver failure. The listed side effects are only some of the most common, the list of potential complications is much longer in reality.

According to recent literature, patients who lose weight with the intention of undergoing gastric bypass surgery, typically use between 103 lbs to 178 lbs. The American College of Surgeons has stated Type II diabetes can be treated with a gastric bypass. So, why is a bypass beneficial for this group of people? The answer is weight loss. However, if you can lose weight by eating correctly, why undergo surgery and possibly risk your life?

One of the local surgery groups used to refer their pre-gastric bypass patients to the Weigh Station. They stopped about 10 years ago when they realized we could take off the weight, and keep it off, without operating on patients. Since the surgeons could not perform the surgery because the patient had lost 70 to 165 lbs, they stopped referring patients to our practice.

We see improvements in patients who suffer from hyperlipidemia, hypertension, and obstructive sleep without gastric bypass. If your primary care physician is asking you to undergo gastric bypass surgery, ask them why? It's best, and least invasive, to first try a weight loss program. I'm not telling you to join the Weigh Station, I'm encouraging you to do more research and weigh the potential risks.

All statements and opinions are based upon my 17 years of experience in bariatric medicine. We have seen depression and anxiety dissipate from many patients after reaching their weight loss goal.

Do some people gain their weight back? Yes. Your weight loss journey will not always be linear; it's all too easy to slip back into old habits. Do people gain their weight back after gastric bypass surgery? The answer is also yes, they do. These are some of the saddest patients I encounter because they have placed themselves in a financial bind due the surgery costs.

If you follow our advice and stay accountable, you will experience dramatic success.

When you lose weight, there is more than just a physical change that occurs. Blood pressure improves and longevity enhances. Type II diabetes will stabilize itself. If you're having difficulty becoming pregnant, the chances of becoming pregnant increase dramatically with weight loss.

As you consider your options to achieve your weight loss dreams, please do thorough research and consider all risks involved. At the Weigh Station, we will do everything possible to support you, and our patients will attest to that.

I hope this helps you make an informed decision regarding your health and weight loss journey.

Blessings,
Chuck Shaffer MD

The Recipe of the Month

Cherry Kale Salad

Ingredients

- *8 Cups kale leaves, rinsed and torn*
- *8 Strips bacon, diced*
- *24 Cups cherries, halved*
- *1/2 Cup blueberries*
- *1/2 Cup diced granny smith apple*
- *1/4 Cup walnuts*
- *Balsamic Vinaigrette:*
 1. *1 Tablespoon Dijon mustard (no sugar added)*
 2. *1/2 Tablespoon Stevia*
 3. *1/2 Teaspoon basil*
 4. *1/4 Cup balsamic vinegar*
 5. *1/3 Cup olive oil*
 6. *Salt and pepper to season*



Directions

Massage torn kale leaves with a bit of sea salt. Heat a medium saute pan to medium-high heat and add the bacon. Cook bacon for 5 minutes, until crispy. Remove and place on a paper towel to let any grease drain.

In a small bowl, add Dijon mustard, Stevia, balsamic vinegar, olive oil, salt and pepper. Whisk to emulsify (so the oil and vinegar are no longer separated). In a larger bowl, add kale, bacon, cherries, blueberries, apples, and walnuts.

Serve dressing on the side or toss in right before serving.

*This recipe provides 1 servings of veggies, 1/2 serving of fruit, 1/2 ounce of protein and 1 serving of fat per portion.