

Karin and Damon Baker

*Individual results may vary. Results are not guaranteed.



Britt, IA — November 6, 2017

Husband and wife, Damon and Karin, would never have had the energy to open a second pizza joint if it wasn't for their vertical sleeve gastrectomy surgeries with Iowa Weight Loss Specialists. "We both lost over 100 pounds in under six months. Folks come into our restaurants specifically to talk to us about our success stories and to see if weight loss surgery is right for them."

Age: 52

Date of surgery:

January 2017

Starting weight: 253 lbs.

Current weight: 155 lbs.

Age: 42

Date of surgery:

January 2017

Starting weight: 311 lbs.

Current weight: 200 lbs.

Before your surgery, what medical conditions were you suffering from?

Karin: I don't even know if I could list all of mine. I suffered from GERD (acid reflux), diabetes, high blood pressure, asthma, nerve pain in my legs and I was on a CPAP machine for sleep apnea.

Damon: I was also on a CPAP machine because I severely suffered from sleep apnea due to my weight.

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Since your vertical sleeve gastrectomy, in which conditions or diseases have you seen a change?

Karin: We both lost over 100 lbs. in the first six months! Thanks to my weight loss, my doctors have taken diabetes and high blood pressure completely off my medical records. I never have to report for insurance purposes that I've ever been diabetic or have had high blood pressure. I've also been off my CPAP machine for 3-4 months and they will be taking me off my inhaler soon. Before surgery I took nine pills per day, now I'm down to four!

Damon: Before surgery, my doctors told me I would never have a chance to get off the CPAP machine, but thanks to the surgery I've been off of it for two months now! It's so great not having to carry those machines around whenever we travel!

What made you decide to have a vertical sleeve gastrectomy?

Karin: When I learned that Dr. Eibes specialized in surgeries that truly helped keep the weight off by removing the part of the stomach that makes you feel hungry, I knew this was the right decision for me. I felt comfortable with the surgery knowing that Iowa Weight Loss Specialists (IWLS) would support me after surgery to help keep the weight off long-term. I had a friend who had done the surgery with IWLS and they had successful results so I decided to go for it!

Damon: I told Karin, if you're going to do this, let's do this together.

Besides the external changes you have experienced, how has the surgery altered your outlook on life and your relationships?

Karin: I'm no longer embarrassed by my weight. I'm so much more confident being out in public and socializing with our friends and family.

Damon: My mood and outlook is so much better and it's nice to receive compliments from others. It makes you feel better about yourself. We've also noticed we've started inspiring our patrons. People will come into the restaurants to talk to us about our story and ask questions. It makes us feel good knowing we can inspire others to take steps towards a healthier life.

What kinds of things are you able to do now that before the surgery were difficult or impossible?

Karin: We no longer have to carry two CPAP machines with us when we go places! It's some of the non-scale victories that make the difference. Before surgery, I was unable to tie my own shoes without difficulty. One week after surgery I could tie my own shoe without lifting my leg.

I went from a size 22 to a size 6. I can now buy a pair of pants off the rack! I've never been able to do that in my entire life. My husband can also now ride on rides at amusement parks because he meets the weight requirements.

Damon: My back is as strong as it was when I was a teenager. We never would have had enough energy to open our second restaurant – in under 30 days no less – if it wasn't for our surgeries. Both of us have so much more energy to live the lives we want to live.

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What would you say about Dr. Eibes and the Iowa Weight Loss Specialists team?

Karin: Dr. Eibes and the IWLS staff answered every question I had from the very beginning and they were there with us every step of the way after surgery as well. The personal care, education and support they give before, and months after, the surgery is above and beyond what other places provide.

Damon: The IWLS team is really good at what they do. Any time you have a question they're available to answer it. They answered all of mine leading up to surgery, so I was completely comfortable the day of my surgery.

What would you tell someone who was considering the surgery?

Karin: The surgery is the easy part. The hard part is to make sure you can stick with it mentally. Be prepared to give it 110%!

Damon: Make sure that you're mentally ready to take this step. There's really nothing to worry about as far as the surgery goes, the physical part is easy. It's the mental part that will take work because you'll have to cut out all the junk food that got you to where you were.

As restaurant owners, you have the extra challenge of being around food all the time, how do you manage to keep the weight off?

Karin: I work with the dietitians at IWLS to discuss healthy meal plan options that are customized to our personal needs. I buy healthy fruits, vegetables, and lean meats, which I weigh on a food scale, package up and put them in the freezer. At the beginning of each meal, we choose our protein, vegetable and fruit, put them on a small plate and eat, taking care to taste and appreciate our meals. I also make sure to have healthy meals and snacks on-the-go.

Damon: Although we are around pizza and pasta all day, we know what we need to do to maintain our healthy weights. We're fortunate to have access to a variety of healthy ingredients and the IWLS team helped us learn how to portion out healthy foods appropriately. Fortunately, being busy restaurant owners, we get plenty of exercise by being on our feet all day!