

Kristina Forget

Kristina was locked inside her own body at a young age. She lived a life dominated by eating. After trying unsuccessfully to lose weight with multiple diets and even diet pills, she began to have physical pains at the age of 25. Her consultation with Dr. Eibes helped her realize she had a lot of life ahead and started her journey to having her life back.

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

- Polycystic Ovarian Syndrome
- Anxiety/depression
- High blood pressure
- High cholesterol
- Tendonitis in forearms
- Morbid obesity
- Acid Reflux

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

- I no longer experience the symptoms associated with Polycystic Ovarian Syndrome.
- I still have anxiety and depression but I'm being treated with less medication and lower doses.
- I no longer have high blood pressure, high cholesterol or any symptoms of tendonitis.
- I am considered overweight now, rather than morbidly obese.
- I still have acid reflux but symptoms are controlled with medication.



Before surgery



After surgery

continued

Age: 26

Occupation: Account Coordinator

Date of surgery: July 15, 2013

Starting weight: 292 lbs.

Current weight: 186 lbs.

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What made you decide to have a vertical sleeve gastrectomy?

I had been obese my entire life. I tried and failed many diets, even though I was fairly active. My senior year of high school, I lost 60 pounds by using a weight loss drug. Because I did not exercise, as soon as I stopped taking the pill, I gained it all back and then some. It wasn't until I started getting knee pain at 25 years old that I realized I needed help. I was an emotional eater who also ate because of boredom. My whole life seemed to revolve around food and it made everything better. My consult with Dr. Eibes represented my admitting that I had a problem, and I needed help.

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

I am more confident and positive than I ever have been. My relationships have taken a turn for the better. For example, my boyfriend and I are able to go to the gym together and do more physical activities together like 5K runs. It has also changed my view on people who are obese. You never know their true struggle. I have realized how society treats people who are obese. Before surgery, I knew I was big but never knew how big I was. I am sometimes saddened when I realize how many more people talk to me, make eye contact, or even open doors for me now that I am thinner.

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

Before surgery it seemed like I could NEVER go outside in the summer. If I went to the State Fair, I would last an hour. Because of all of the weight I was carrying, I would sweat and get very irritable.

Today, I run at the gym. In fact, I go to the gym regularly. I participated in my first 5k. While I didn't complete the event, I didn't take a break. I never had the slightest interest in doing that before. Because of the education I received with the surgery, I am now able to say no to food. When I get bored and want to eat, I find something else to do or just go for a walk. If I really think I

need food, I go to the fridge and get water. Only then do I decide if I am really hungry or if it is my head. I could write a novel about what all has changed. I am only a year from my surgery and I know there is so much more to come.

What do you wish you'd known before the surgery?

With my own research and the knowledge I received from support groups, I knew what was going to happen. I wish I could have anticipated something that is different with each individual. I wish I would have known how much of a mental change the surgery would make on me. I cannot see what I look like. I laughed when people told me that could happen, and maybe that is why I wasn't prepared. How could you not see yourself? Your brain cannot keep up with the changes you are going through so quickly. I am told by people what I look like, I see pictures, and I look in mirrors, but I know that I don't look like what I see because I am still seeing the 290 pound Kristina.

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

Words cannot describe how truly grateful I am for Dr. Eibes and the Iowa Weight Loss Specialists team. In fact, I am crying as I write this. I could not ever have imagined being as healthy as I am today. I didn't think there was any other me than the "fat" me. Dr. Eibes and team were so informative, and caring. Even when I went into the office rude as can be because of heartburn I was experiencing, I truly felt each and every one of them cared and understood. Dr. Eibes and team gave me my life back.

What would you tell someone who was considering the surgery?

My advice is to get to the root of their obesity. The surgery is a tool. It will not change your eating habits. It will only allow you to eat less. You still choose what you put in your mouth. They also need to do their research. There is much more to the surgery than weight loss. There are a lot of mental and emotional battles that you will endure as well. I am almost at my goal but I am embarrassed because of my excess skin. It will always be a challenge and you have to be ready to make that change, commit, and say, "I CAN do this."

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