

Testimonial from Joy Peagram

At the beginning of 2005 I had given up with my weight. I resolved never again to make a New Year's resolution to lose weight because every year I failed and ended up weighing more at the end of the year than the beginning.

Over the past couple of years I had seen the occasional magazine article on people who had had stomach operations for weight loss that took my interest but I never followed up on any of them. I suppose at the back of my mind I wondered if they would really work and I had the overwhelming feeling of guilt that I should be able to lose the weight by myself and keep it off.

The turning point came for me when I realized two things: that I was wearing the largest size underwear that I could buy, and these were tight. I began to panic about where I would actually buy clothes if I exceeded size 24!, and secondly, I want to live to be an very active and fit retiree who can do a lot of traveling with no health problems.

So my journey began. I finally approached my current doctor and asked for a referral. I was absolutely amazed at her instant support and encouragement. She wrote the referral then and there.

When I phoned Northridge and asked for an appointment, I was advised that Rob was to hold a seminar that week for prospective patients and other interested persons. That seminar was absolutely amazing. After listening to Rob talk for at least an hour, I felt a huge weight lift from my shoulders – I was not to blame for my weight. That night was probably the best night's sleep I can ever remember having. Once I embraced the fact that I was not to blame, the rest just seemed so easy.

At my appointment, when Rob asked me if he "could take away the hunger, could I diet?" My answer was an emphatic "yes". My previous diets had always failed because, in the end, I could not cope with the hunger pain and thinking of food 24 hours of the day.

I had my operation in June 2005 and, for myself, I resolved to go hard with the subsequent dieting. To date I have lost 45 kg, I have gone from a size 24 to size 12. About two months after the operation, I began to feel restless and, for the first time in my life, actually wanted to do some exercise. This began very slowly because at first, I could not even walk the 200m up my street without stopping 2-3 times to get my breath.

I am now walking 6.5 km every day and in April 2006, less than a year after the operation easily undertook the Alison Roe Trust walk of 10 km around the Auckland Domain. Friends and I celebrated afterwards with a champagne brunch on the waterfront at St Heliers. I now look forward to exercise – because for the first time in my life, I really want to do it!

I would never have achieved so much without the support of a group of friends who have all had the lap band during the last year. We meet regularly, share stories, laughs, tears and lots and lots of tips. If I have a problem or a question, someone in the group will know the answer or have a suggestion. We are all traveling our weight loss journey at different paces and at a pace that suits each of us.

My advice to anyone considering the operation – go for it, you have the rest of your life to really look forward to. I have never been happier in my whole life. It is a joy to get up every morning.

For me, the most important benefits of losing the weight has been regaining my self-respect, feeling empowered to say “no” to something I don’t want to do and being mentally strong enough to stand up for myself.

I now look forward to socializing with my friends, and the quality and quantity of food barely ranks a passing thought.

I would say to anyone considering an operation that it is a tool, just as a hammer is a tool to a builder, the house won’t get built unless the builder uses the hammer correctly. The band will not work unless you put the work in yourself and are prepared to diet and exercise. If you feel that if someone can take your constant hunger away and stop you thinking about food 24/7, then you could diet successfully, then go for it.

Joy Peagram