



Marc Bessler, MD

Letter from the Director

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Dear Reader,

There were several topics in the news during Obesity Week, the annual conference of specialists in weight loss and metabolic surgery, ending November 2nd, in Washington, DC. The first was both shocking and surprising: America's obesity rate continues to soar, despite government attempts at intervention. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention report that nearly 40 percent of adults and about 20 percent of adolescents are obese—the highest rates ever recorded nationally.

Legislators hope to address this problem with the 2017 Treat and Reduce Obesity Act that now has majority support in the House of Representatives. This bill gives Medicaid and Medicare Services authority to expand coverage of behavioral counseling and prescription drugs for weight management. [Learn more here.](#)

Researchers have also learned that bariatric surgery lowers cancer risk by a third, and by even more, for obesity associated cancers. This is a significant finding, especially for women. [More below.](#)

Finally, the biggest take home message for clinicians at Obesity Week was the importance of consistent follow-up after bariatric surgery. At Columbia's Center for Metabolic and Weight Loss surgery, we make sure things are going well from a nutritional standpoint and identify problems before they get out of hand. We check to see that your vitamin levels are normal that you are taking the right amount of vitamin supplements for your individual

needs. We also recommend an endoscopy one and three years after a sleeve gastrectomy, the most commonly performed bariatric procedure in the US. We do so because some patients may develop problems with the esophagus related to acid reflux, though not all will have obvious symptoms. Since there currently are no universal guidelines for the management of these patients, we've decided to be proactive.

This issue of our newsletter features a Q&A with Dr. Abraham Krikhely on robotic surgery for obesity. And as we approach the holidays, we have some advice for you on eating well and keeping to your target goals—along with other articles.

In good health,

Marc Bessler, MD, FACS

Director, The Center for Metabolic and Weight Loss Surgery

<http://columbiasurgery.org/weight-loss>

Robotic Surgery for Weight Loss: Greater Control and Clarity

Robot enhanced minimally invasive surgery is the latest advance in bariatric surgery. In the following Q&A, Dr. Abraham Krikhely explains what patients need to know about this new approach.

[More here](#)

In the News

Adult Obesity in US Reaches All-Time High

About 40 percent of adults and 19 percent of youth are obese, the highest rate recorded in the nation for these age groups. Since 1999, we've seen a staggering rise in the prevalence of obesity, with no signs of slowing down, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

[CNN, NBC News](#)

Obesity in Children and Teens Spike Worldwide

The number of children and adolescents with obesity is also on the rise, globally. This figure hit 124 million in 2016 – more than 10 times higher than the number 40 years ago.

[NPR](#)

This is the Crazy Amount of Money You Can Save by Losing Weight

A new study published in *Obesity*, shows that losing weight at any age results in significant financial savings. Researchers found that, at every age between 20 and 80, dropping down by one weight category was enough to accrue these benefits. The model suggests that an obese 40-year-old could save between \$18,000 and \$32,000 over a lifetime by getting down to a healthy weight.

[Health.com](#)

Bariatric Surgery Lowers Cancer Risk for Severely Obese

After bariatric surgery, the severely obese can lower their risk of developing cancer by at least a third, according to a recent study in *Annals of Surgery*. The benefit was greatest among obesity-associated cancers. Researchers think that these reductions are linked to modified estrogen levels in the high percentage of post-menopausal women in the study. Another cause may be reduced insulin resistance, a risk factor for pancreatic cancer.

Among bariatric surgery patients there was a 42 percent lower risk of postmenopausal breast cancer and a 50 percent lower risk of endometrial cancer. The risk of colon cancer was also 41 percent lower, and the risk of pancreatic cancer dropped by 54 percent.

[Newsmax Health](#)

How to Enjoy the Holidays – and Keep your Healthy Habits

Tips from the National Institutes of Health on how to navigate the holidays, without losing ground on weight and sleep.

[Huffington Post](#)

The Center for Metabolic and Weight Loss Surgery has offices in several convenient locations in the tri-state area. [You can make an appointment here.](#)

