



Marc Bessler, MD

Letter from the Director

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Dear Reader,

Type 2 diabetes and obesity are twin epidemics. Some 25.8 million Americans are diabetic and obesity is a major independent risk factor for developing the disease. In fact, more than 90% of type 2 diabetics are overweight or obese, according to the [American Society for Metabolic and Bariatric Surgery](#). The good news is that modest weight loss, as little as 5% of total body weight, can help to improve type 2 diabetes in patients in this category.

In this issue, [Dr. Abraham Krikhely](#) describes how bariatric surgery can help diabetics improve their health, counteracting many of their symptoms. We also have other news on this front:

—At the recent Diabetes Surgery Summit, a joint statement was issued by numerous international diabetes organizations recommending bariatric surgery for a wide range of diabetic patients. This included type 2 diabetes in patients with class 3 obesity (BMI over 40) and those with class 2 obesity (BMI 35-40) whose sugar levels can't be controlled with lifestyle and optimal medical therapy. Read more below.

—[European researchers report](#) that a significant number of patients with obesity and diabetes have been able to stop taking medication to lower blood sugar following weight loss surgery. The study looked at all patients in

France—nearly 15,000—who had undergone primary bariatric surgery from 2008 through 2015. Nearly half had adjustable gastric banding, nearly 29 percent had gastric bypass, and 22 percent had sleeve gastrectomy. Six years after surgery, roughly half of those who had surgery discontinued their medications, compared with just 9 percent of a non-surgical control group.

—Another [study](#) shows that diabetic patients who underwent bariatric surgery had more beneficial metabolic changes, enabling them to keep weight off better than those who received intensive medical therapy.

Read more about the [Center for Metabolic and Bariatric surgery](#), and the highly personalized, integrative care you will receive at Columbia.

And be sure to use our [interactive tool](#) to help you find out if you're a candidate for weight loss surgery.

Below you'll find more articles about the benefits of bariatric surgery and tools to help you reach a healthy target weight.

One last note: As spring comes, remember to exercise and get outdoors. Any weight loss strategy depends not just on surgery, but on getting regular exercise and eating properly. As one study shows, good health depends not just on cutting calories, but on eating more on fresh fruits and vegetables. In short, the quality of the food you eat matters! (See full article below)

To good health,

Marc Bessler, MD, FACS

Director, The Center for Metabolic and Weight Loss Surgery

www.columbiasurgery.org/weight-loss

Why Diabetics Improve with Bariatric Surgery

Experts now concur that bariatric surgery is the most effective treatment available for obese individuals with diabetes. Yet only a small percentage of these patients surgery are taking advantage of this option.

The reason? “Many referring physicians still have an inaccurate perception of what bariatric surgery is, or are not aware of latest procedures,” says

[Abraham Krikhely, MD](#), an expert at Columbia's Center for Metabolic and Weight Loss Surgery. "With new guidelines, we hope that will change."

In the following interview, Dr. Krikhely explains how weight loss surgery can "add years to life and life to years" for diabetics who are obese or overweight.

[Read more](#)

To schedule an appointment, please call 212.305.4000.

In the News

The Key to Dieting is Quality, Not Quantity

If you have a weight problem and think that just cutting back the amount you eat will do the trick—think again. A new study shows that it's what you eat that makes the difference.

People who cut back on added sugar, refined grains and highly processed foods while concentrating on eating plenty of vegetables and whole foods—without worrying about counting calories or limiting portion sizes—lose significant amounts of weight over the course of a year.

[Read more](#)

Bariatric Surgery May Reduce Pain

A new study shows that obese individuals who have bariatric surgery also report less arthritic pain—especially in the knee and wrist—after losing about 29% of their total body weight.

[Read more](#)

Intragastric Balloon Device Approved

The American Society for Metabolic and Bariatric Surgery (ASMBS) has added the intragastric balloon to its list of approved devices and procedures, though the procedure is still not covered by insurance. An intragastric balloon is an inflatable device placed into the stomach to reduce the amount of food the patient can consume. Intragastric balloons are not permanent, but

are left in place for approximately six months and then removed.

The ASMBS hopes that their approval, and the mounting evidence that supports the appropriate use of the device, will allow more people to access this new treatment option for obesity.

[Read more](#)

Exercise Helps Counter the Ill Effects of Obesity—Even for the Severely Obese

A new study published in BMC Obesity suggests fitness may be equally or even more important than body weight in determining cardiovascular health for people living with mild, moderate, or severe obesity.

The study analyzed 853 obese or overweight patients and assessed their cardiorespiratory fitness. Those who were highly fit had no difference in other markers of health (blood pressure, lipid levels, and blood glucose levels), regardless of their status as overweight, moderate or severely obese.

“Normally, you see the largest exponential increase in health risk with severe obesity. So to see no difference in risk (from mild to severe obesity) was really surprising,” said Jennifer Kuk, the study’s lead author. “Even if you don’t lose weight, being physically active is likely going to be beneficial to your health and it is important to understand success is more than what you see on the scale.”

[Read more](#)

Using Art to Tackle Obesity and Diabetes in Youth

Type 2 diabetes in children has climbed more than 30 percent—especially among children from poor and minority families. Black and Hispanic children now have eight times the risk of developing diabetes than others.

To combat this epidemic, public health experts and arts educators in San Francisco have created a campaign in which diabetes is portrayed as a social justice issue, not just as a medical problem related to poor diet and a lack of exercise. The diabetes epidemic, they say, is related to stress, poverty, violence and limited access to healthy and affordable foods.

Young people use poetry to express how diabetes and obesity affect them.

[Read more](#)

In a Sweeping War on Obesity, Chile Slays Tony the Tiger

The bad eating habits that set the stage for obesity and a host of medical problems start very young. That's why the government of Chile has set new regulations that require explicit labelling and attempt to limit the marketing of sugar-rich foods to children. New mandatory packaging redesigns and labeling rules aim to transform the eating habits of 18 million people.

[Read more](#)

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.](#)



Columbia University
Department of Surgery
161 Fort Washington Avenue
New York, NY 10032
info@columbiasurgery.org