

STRIKE A POSE

Weight-loss procedure affords patients option of incisionless, same-day solution

By Victor M. Andrews
Special Sections Staff writer

Megan Duplain is the typical, active mom. Her career at the helm of a special education department in

Tucson keeps her busy.

Also in the mix are a 12-year-old and a baby.

And, until a few months ago, Duplain also had some extra weight — about 36 pounds — that she wanted to shed.

Like many people, Duplain was having trouble losing those few dozen pounds. Diets hadn't worked. Hunger was still a problem. And the idea of a surgical remedy was not in the cards, even though her brother is a nationally recognized leader in the bariatric surgical field.

There was a solution for Duplain and for others.

Strike a POSE

— Primary Obesity Surgery, Endoluminal.

This bariatric procedure is "incisionless," meaning doctors reach the stomach through the mouth. Physicians use an endoscope with cameras and surgical tools to staple sections of the stomach, making it smaller.

A smaller stomach fills faster. Patients eat less and hormones that trigger hunger drives are diminished.

"It's an outpatient, endoscopic procedure that takes about an hour with the equipment that we're using," said Dr. Tom Lavin of Surgical Specialists of Louisiana.

And for his sister Duplain, the procedure has helped her drop a majority of her extra weight (20 pounds) and helped curb her appetite — part of the total weight-loss program of which surgical options are a part.

WHY DOES IT WORK

Lavin said there are two main reasons all bariatric surgery works to help patients lose weight.

The first is the stomach is made smaller. This can be done with POSE or through a number of other procedures, including gastric bypass, gastric sleeve surgery, adjustable gastric banding or restorative surgical procedures for post-bypass patients.

The smaller stomach fills faster so patients eat less, said Lavin. Less food means fewer calories.

Also important is the change in hormonal reactions to hunger.

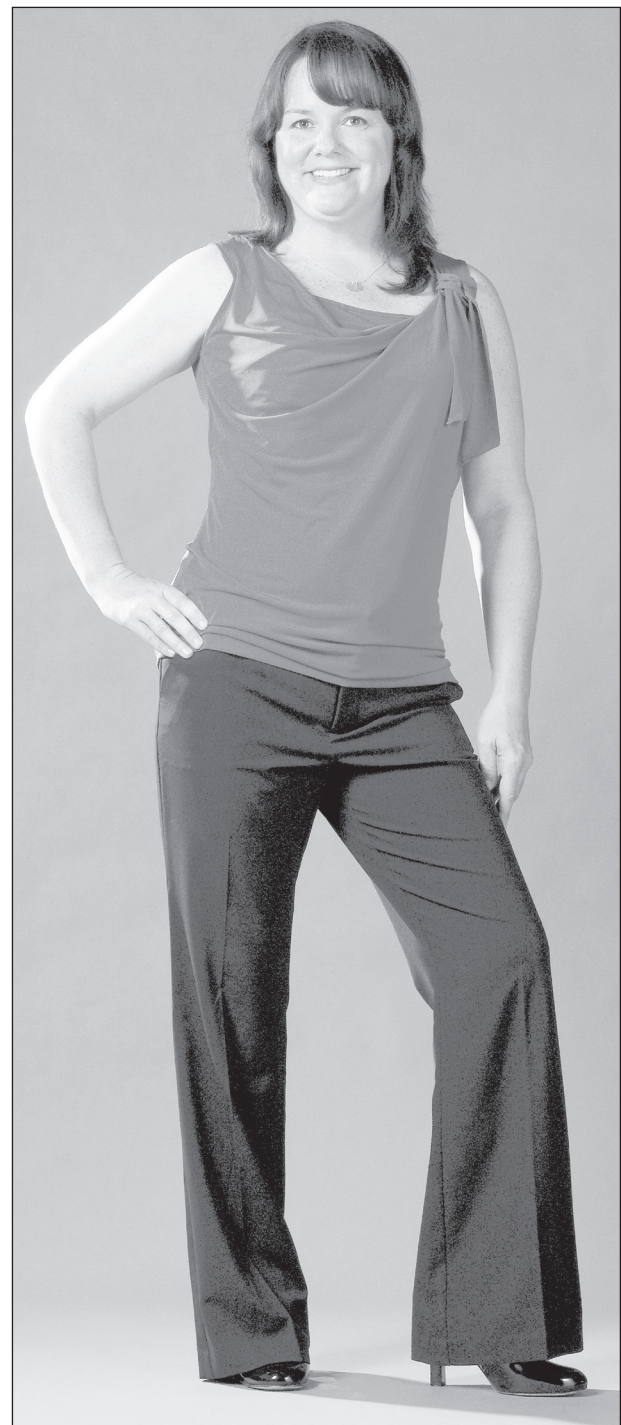
"When you decrease the size of that fundus area (the bottom of the stomach which has been sectioned off), you change all the hormones," he said. "Hunger drive decreases and some say it disappears."

The "foregut" hormones, produced in the stomach, are released into the bloodstream and work with the brain to determine hunger drive. With fewer, the desire to eat is lessened.

"Patients feel an overall decrease of hunger and decrease of cravings," said Lavin.

WHO DOES IT WORK FOR

Lavin noted that the POSE procedure has several aspects that increase its appeal.



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For many patients, the amount of weight loss is not as great as for those who might be morbidly obese.

"We'll do it on patients that want to lose 25 to 45, 50 pounds," he said. Other procedures in the bariatric surgeon's arsenal are better suited for patients who have greater amounts of weight to lose. Generally, he said, patients needing to lose more than 75 pounds are candidates for surgical solutions.

POSE also appeals to those who, like Duplain, prefer to have an incisionless solution.

Lavin said there are no cuts and there is no tissue removal.

And for those who want the most up-to-date procedures, this is a fresh option — right in south Louisiana.

Lavin and his associates have performed the surgery on about 50 patients and have had good early results. In fact, he will be presenting findings at an international conference on the results Surgical Specialists have seen with this new procedure.

DUPLAIN'S RESULTS

For Duplain, the procedure was a one-day event that did not include cutting or scarring.

"I went in the morning and came home that afternoon," said Duplain. "They went down my throat, it was incisionless and outpatient."

"The incisionless part was key for me."

Duplain's results are a source of happiness for her.

"You never have to worry about your weight again because you eat less and you're satisfied," she said. "You're not hungry. I eat small amounts and don't have to worry about it after that."

"I don't have that sluggish feeling anymore," she said. "I have a lot more energy."

And those last few pounds?

"I know now that I have to add working out to my schedule to get the last 15 pounds off," she said, adding the regime would include "intensive cardio" training.

Another part of the program includes knowing when and how to eat.

"Even though I don't feel the cravings I do know you have to have behavior modification," the Arizona resident said. "Now I had to make a commitment to acknowledge that I'm not hungry."

(EDITOR'S NOTE: The writer is a patient at Surgical Specialists.)

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