

# "I Choose Freedom"

## Knoxville Woman Loses Over 100 Pounds After Bariatric Surgery

Christy Brown has struggled with feeling overweight her entire life. In 2017 Brown says she stepped on the scale at 325 pounds, her heaviest weight, and knew she needed help.

She intensified her efforts to eat nutritious foods and increase exercise. She tried various diets and monitored her caloric intake. She didn't miss a workout at the gym. After a year and a half of vigorous effort, she had lost only 12 pounds. "I felt I did everything I should be doing, and I hit a point where I couldn't do it on my own," Brown recalls. "It's hard to admit that it took me until that point."



K. Robert Williams, MD

interacted with his staff really impressed me, and I thought that was really important."

Brown made an appointment with Dr. Williams in June 2019 to discuss her options.

### "I'm Doing This for Me"

Although her procedure was scheduled for March 2020, it was postponed because of COVID-19, which delayed some elective hospital procedures. But Brown was not dismayed. "I had surgery when I was supposed to," she says. "I had lost some weight. Dr. Williams was very supportive. I weighed 307 at my first appointment with him and on surgery day, I weighed 286 pounds."

Dr. Williams performed a laparoscopic Roux-en-Y gastric bypass in June 2020 at Parkwest Medical Center, where Brown spent two nights. "We selected this operation because of her history of reflux and esophagitis," reports Dr. Williams. "Roux-en-Y gas-



Christy Brown has shed more than 100 pounds since having bariatric surgery at Parkwest Medical Center. She is thankful for the compassionate care she received, and says she could not have done it without the community of Parkwest bariatric support groups.

tric bypass surgery is often a good treatment for reflux as well as obesity."

Roux-en-Y gastric bypass is the most common method of gastric bypass surgery. Done laparoscopically, small incisions are made in the abdomen to reduce the size of the upper stomach to a small pouch. Roux-en-Y gastric bypass surgery helps reduce the amount of food consumed by decreasing hunger and overall calorie absorption from fat.

"Christy had great success because she was motivated and followed the rules after surgery," Dr. Williams says. "She has been compliant with diet, exercise and vitamins, which has allowed her to reap the ben-

efits that this operation has to offer."

For patients like Brown, Dr. Williams indicated the risks of not having surgery can exacerbate weight-related medical conditions like diabetes, polycystic ovary syndrome, hypertension and fatty liver disease. Overweight men and women in their 30s are also at higher risk of developing sleep apnea, high cholesterol, cardiovascular disease and certain cancers as they age.

Brown recalls, "The morning of my surgery, I was nervous, but I didn't have any doubts. I had no problems with surgery. The nurses on the floor were all so compassionate. Dr. Williams came to see me and

gave me the report of how everything went. I thought, 'I have picked the right doctor; thank you, Jesus.'"

She continues, "I have had to be strong about doing this surgery for me, and it has been one of the best decisions I ever made."

### Looking Back

Brown encourages anyone considering the procedure to consider what issues caused their weight gain to begin with and their reasons for losing weight. "Do research and talk to others who have had the surgery, as that helped me. Look at the types of food you eat, how foods affect your body."

Brown continues, "Use this surgery as a tool, and

continue to learn signals from your body, like feeling hungry and full. That was new for me. Listening to those signals to do what's best for my body has been important."

### Fast Forward to Today

Seven months after surgery, Brown has lost 111 pounds and weighs less than 200 pounds.

"I still have to get up every day and decide to eat correctly and move my body," she says. "If I described it in one word, it would be 'freedom.' That is the one thing that comes to mind. Freedom in my body, my thoughts. And I just feel...lighter."

Brown takes walks with her husband and their dog, Chloe. "When we moved here a few years ago, I could not walk up this one big hill in our neighborhood without feeling like I was having a heart attack," recalls Brown. "Now we walk up it and are still able to talk. I can move in my body and not feel like I'm dying. That is what I mean by freedom."

"This process has given me an opportunity to have the life I always wanted," Brown says. "Being able to have this tool, and to have this support, made me feel like I could accomplish this. There's freedom in that. Knowing there is a team behind me made me feel like I could do it."

## Searching for Support

Christy Brown, who underwent Roux-en-Y gastric bypass surgery in 2020, hopes people attend a support group, both before and after surgery. "For me, the support group is somewhere to go that's safe, to share successes, and even times when I'm not so successful, and how I have learned from it."

Stella Mouzon, RN, BSN, MSM, is the bariatric coordinator at Parkwest Center for Bariatric Surgery. Mouzon says, "Christy was more reserved when I first met her. She has blossomed during her journey and become more outgoing. I think the group has helped that."

Mouzon continues, "We see in our bariatric support group that it helps to

hear what others are going through. We often feel alone, and think we are the only ones struggling. It helps to hear from other people with similar experiences to get us through difficult times, to

help us stay on track and to encourage each other."

Bariatric support group meetings are held on the third and fourth Monday of each month from 5:30 – 6:30 p.m. at Parkwest

Medical Center. Participants choose the meeting day that is most convenient for them. Registration is required. Please call 865-374-PARK (7275) to reserve your spot!



## Bariatric Seminars at Parkwest

Interested in learning more about weight-loss surgery? We invite you to attend one of our free informational seminars to learn more about the bariatric surgery process.

The bariatric seminars are designed to help people make their own decisions and discuss benefits, options and risks. The bariatric support groups are for those who have had surgery, and those considering surgery are also welcome to attend.

To learn more, visit [TreatedWell.com/bariatrics](https://www.treatedwell.com/bariatrics) or call 865-374-PARK (7275).



## Have You Heard?

The Center for Bariatric Surgery at Parkwest is nationally accredited!



For more information, visit [TreatedWell.com/bariatrics](https://www.treatedwell.com/bariatrics)

