

# “I Feel Like a Brand New Person”

## Kingsport Woman Loses 140 Pounds with Bariatric Surgery

Angel Lubrano has struggled with her weight for many years and experienced chronic pain, gastrointestinal problems and shortness of breath. She knew something had to change when weight-related issues like diabetes jeopardized her health and affected her daily life.

“I would walk through a store and have to take breaks and sit down,” she says. “I would be too exhausted to go out with friends or family after work. I thought, well, I want to live life to the fullest, but this isn’t it.”

Weighing approximately 287 pounds, she sought weight-loss options at Fort Sanders Regional Medical Center.



Angel Lubrano knew she needed to make a change. At 287 pounds, she sought surgical weight-loss treatment at Fort Sanders Regional Medical Center. Today, she’s lost over 140 pounds.



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work of the individual that gets them there.”

### “I Did the Work for Myself”

Approximately a year and a half after surgery, Lubrano is down to 145 pounds and feeling great. Looking back, the wife and mother says that before surgery she was living to eat. Now, she’s eating to live. Dr. Colquitt says, “Angel is the ideal patient. She was

motivated and interested in what we had to say. She believed in the system and remained true to the course in front of her.”

Lubrano says, “I was tired of living the life I was in. I was in and the body I was in. I was tired of feeling helpless and hopeless. I know now that I’m living the way I need to.” She has since resolved many of her health issues, including fatty liver disease and diabetes.

Since her surgery, Lubrano says her confidence and self-image have also improved. “The change has been emotional, too. I feel like I finally did the work for myself, mentally, physically, just everything to feel happy inside instead of all these areas dragging me down.”

### Family Support

In addition to her health-care team, her parents, two

children and loving husband have all been a steady source of support. “My husband has been great with everything,” she says. “He even started using an app on his phone to start tracking what he eats, which helps you be aware of calories you’re taking in.”

Her children are proud of her progress and willingness to improve her life. Lubrano’s son remarked that when he looks at photos of her from the past, he can barely recognize her. “He says it doesn’t seem like he’s looking at the same person. And I tell him I don’t feel like that person anymore.”

### “I Wouldn’t Trade It for the World”

She says the way she feels now is a feeling she wouldn’t trade for the world. “Before I lost the weight, I would get dressed up but still wouldn’t feel confident. I felt I had to hide myself. Now, I feel so sure of myself. I would recommend this procedure to anyone who feels that way.”

Her advice to others is also to heed doctor’s orders. “I do what I’m supposed to do,” she says. “I take vitamins, I get my bloodwork done and monitor liquid and food intake. I’m such a changed person, I don’t want to go back to the person I was before.”

### Robotic-Assisted Gastric Bypass Surgery

Her primary physician referred her to Mark Colquitt, MD, a board-certified bariatric surgeon at Fort Sanders Regional. After discussing her options, they determined together that she would be a good candidate for robotic-assisted Roux-en-Y gastric bypass surgery.

During this procedure the surgeon controls robotic-assisted instruments 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.

After her procedure in January 2020, she stayed one night in the hospital. Lubrano is thankful for the physicians, nurses and entire care team who cared for her pre- and post-operation.

“I took classes to prepare for how I’d feel after surgery,” she recalls. “I highly recommend that to anyone who goes through this. It was essential to the healing process because knowing what to expect really helped me. I slowly started doing

my walking and measuring my protein intake.

“The team was amazing. They told me all these special things about nutrition and how my body would accept things. I knew if I didn’t commit, then it wouldn’t work.”

Dr. Colquitt remarks, “From a surgical standpoint, weight loss is not only partly the result of surgery, but much of the weight loss result is because of the knowledge and habits the patient builds. The surgery may allow the pathway to the weight loss, but it’s the hard

## Minimally Invasive Robotic-Assisted Surgery



In 2004, Fort Sanders Regional Medical Center was the first to introduce a minimally invasive surgical robotic system to East Tennessee. The hospital continues to add new robotic systems and to stay on the cutting edge of technology to better help patients.

Robotic-assisted surgery is a highly effective alternative to some traditional surgical procedures. Combined with the skills of surgeons, this computer-based technology can enhance the healing and well-being of surgery patients.

Mark Colquitt, MD, board certified general and bariatric surgeon at Fort Sanders Regional Medical Center, has performed more than a thousand bypass surgeries using robotic-assisted technology.

He says it is his preferred method for both gastric bypass and gastric sleeve because of the precision and accuracy.

The surgical robotics system replicates the surgeon’s movements in real time and is completely under the surgeon’s control at all times. The surgeon controls the robot’s movements, allowing for greater dexterity and access to hard-to-reach areas of the body. The majority of robotic-assisted gastric bypass patients go home the next day, and most people are walking the halls within two hours following surgery.

The tool is ergonomically designed for the doctor to see a digital 3D image of the body, magnified 10 or 20 times what the normal eye can see. This is particularly important when

operating on heavier patients, says Dr. Colquitt.

Fort Sanders Regional’s surgical robots cover a number of specialty areas, including bariatric surgery, general surgery, gynecological surgery, neurosurgery and oncology, among others.

### Am I a Candidate?

Deciding to have bariatric surgery is a commitment to better health. For many patients, bariatric surgery is also a life-saving procedure. You are a candidate for bariatric surgery if you:

- Are an adult (age 18 or more)
- Have a Body Mass Index (BMI) of 40 or more
- Have a BMI of 35 or more with an obesity-related condition such as diabetes, sleep

apnea, high blood pressure, high cholesterol, etc.

- Have been overweight for more than five years
- Have multiple failed attempts at non-surgical weight loss
- Are ready to make a lifelong commitment to change your lifestyle, diet and exercise habits
- Understand and are committed to following the nutritional diet required after bariatric surgery to avoid malnutrition
- Exhibit emotional stability
- Are physically able to undergo abdominal surgery

Each patient is different. If you feel you are a candidate and are interested in weight-loss surgery, please call 865-541-4500 or visit [FSRegional.com/Bariatric-Surgery](http://FSRegional.com/Bariatric-Surgery).

## Don’t Weight Any Longer

Fort Sanders Regional Medical Center offers surgical and non-surgical weight-loss options.

Our staff is here to help you choose the option that’s right for you and your weight-loss goals.

