

## OBESITY: A DISEASE

One of the most valuable discoveries I made during my bariatric journey was learning that obesity is a disease. This knowledge helped me to better navigate my struggles with my weight; giving me the power to release my negative core beliefs that I am lazy, unmotivated, and that it's all my fault. Research shows that obesity is a complex disease. There are multiple factors that contribute to it, none of which mean we are "bad" people.



### Things I wish I knew *before* bariatric surgery

- The World Health Organization (W.H.O.) recognizes obesity as a chronic and progressive disease resulting from multiple environmental and genetic factors.
- There is no cure. You will be fighting the disease of obesity for the rest of your life. Even at your lowest weight, you are still at risk.
- Research tells us that there is a 1% chance that someone who is obese will successfully reach a healthy weight and stay there using only diet and exercise.
- Bariatric surgery increases the chance for success to 50%.
- Obesity is NOT a behavioral issue of inadequate willpower and a lack of self-control. Obesity is often a combination of the following:
  - Hormonal conditions like PCOS & thyroid issues
  - Medications like steroids & antidepressants
  - Environmental factors including types of foods available
  - Genetics
  - Imbalance in food & activity
  - Trauma
  - Stress
  - Lack of sleep
  - Consumption of highly processed foods, foods with high fructose corn syrup, and/or foods containing high amounts of sugar.
- Bariatric surgery isn't enough. Adjunct treatment is a must for lifelong success. This includes individual therapy, support groups, possible medication, & dedication to movement.

Much of the medical community use the BMI chart to determine if your weight is "healthy" using calculations based on your height, weight, & biological sex. The BMI chart was created by a Belgian Mathematician; not a doctor or health provider. His goal was not to create a measurement of health or obesity, but to find the "ideal man" - studying only white western European men. It was later revamped to quantify our health.



**Please hear me when I say that you are more than a number on a chart. Your worth is not your BMI. You deserve quality care and to be treated with compassion and the upmost respect.**