

AN UPDATE OF NEWS AND SUPPORT FOR PROGRAM PARTICIPANTS

## ...a Spring Fling



A fling can mean different things to different people. For the post-surgical weight loss attendees, the Spring Fling at The Junior League of Houston on May 9 marked the celebration of new beginnings for all those who have successfully changed their lives through the NeWeigh Program.

It was very inspiring to have NeWeigh *little sisters* and *brothers* participate in a fashion show, and to watch them 'strut their stuff' on the runway, modeling clothes from Nordstrom. There was abundant self-confidence in the air, and why not? The models had overcome many obstacles in order to reach their present state of wellness. All of the many others in attendance who had made similar accomplishments cheered them on.

While everyone was enjoying a tasty lunch, professional make up artist, Janice Prevost, Founder of Ja Pré Cosmetics, demonstrated techniques for creating the perfect face.

Following her demonstration, Image Consultant/Humorist, Helen Perry, passed along stress-free dressing tips. Pianist, Joey Boesch set the mood with some beautiful musical scores. Capping off the event was a professional photo shoot that provided participants with a lovely portrait.

All in all, everyone had a great time. The event was moderated by NeWeigh Founder, Diane Crumley, who saw to it that there were ample door prizes. Our thanks go out to First Street Hospital and Bayshore Medical Center who certainly helped make the event successful.

Nordstrom, however, took center stage where they are accustomed to shining. The event was attended by Store Manager, Dan Alvarez; Senior Stylist, Debra Carter, and her assistant, Isabel Cassagnol; Personal Touch Manager, Scotty Smith, and Becky Rutledge from Customer Relations. These are the folks that make shopping at Nordstrom a real pleasure; they are the essence of attentive, thoughtful, professionals.

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Successful new support group has good taste



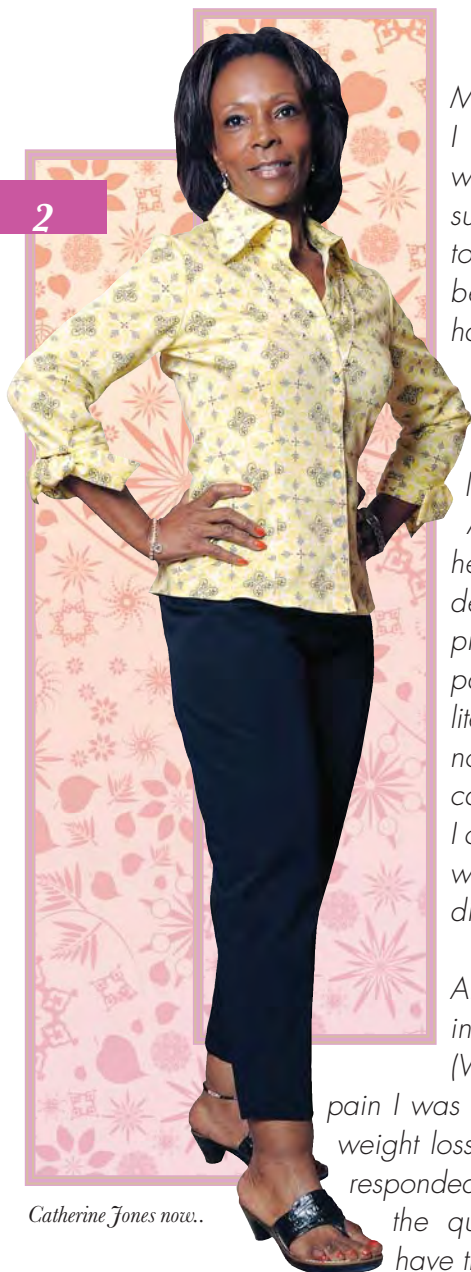
*At left: Brittany Morris lost 144 pounds. She confidently walked the runway at NeWeigh's "Spring Fling" event at Nordstrom's this year.*

*Above left: Nordstrom's Becky Rutledge, Scotty Smith, Debra Carter and Isabel Cassagnol (Dan Alvarez, unshown).*

# Behind the Person

*Catherine Jones lost 118 pounds on her continuing journey. She was also one of the proud and beautiful models at this year's "Spring Fling".*

2



*Catherine Jones now..*

My name is Cathy and I wasn't always overweight. Following my knee surgery in 1995, I began to put on weight, and it became harder and harder for me to take it off.

I tried diet, exercise, and even took some over-the-counter weight loss pills that didn't work.

As time went on, my health began to suffer. I developed high blood pressure, leg and knee pain, and arthritis; I was literally falling apart. I had no life. I went to work and came home. That was all I could manage. My body was crying for help, but I didn't know what to do.

After moving to Houston in 2001, my daughter (Venescia) saw how much pain I was in, and kept suggesting weight loss surgery. I emphatically responded that surgery was out of the question (I would never have that kind of surgery!).

A year passed, and soon became two. As I look back upon this time in my life, I realize that I did have a lot going for me: my faith, my family and my job. I also had a lot going against me, as well. I saw my life going downhill fast with nothing but a bleak future to look forward to. I had no boyfriend or social life at all unless you count my children (bless their hearts) for which I was grateful. I needed more, but how could this be possible? I concluded that my options were limited because I weighed 200 pounds and was continuing to gain weight. I had no energy; I was breathless after walking less than a block and I hurt from head to toe.

So, I was coming around to Venescia's way of thinking. I secretly began looking for weight loss doctors, and found one while leafing through a magazine. I thought that this doctor (no name) could be the answer to my prayers. Unprepared to do it on my own, I mentioned the ad to my daughter, and asked her if she would consider attending the physician's seminar with me. She agreed, of course. I decided to move forward with the process only to discover that my insurance denied my request. The doctor was not willing to battle with the insurance company, so I just gave up.

Six months and 20 more pounds later, I heard a NeWeigh advertisement. The message was about how they work with patients to get insurance companies to approve weight loss surgery; yes, the very surgery that "I would never have", and gave up on. In pain, and desperate for help, I decided to do some research on NeWeigh. I later talked to my best friend (my daughter), and decided to make the call. NeWeigh immediately started to work for me.

Within three months, they notified me that they were successful in securing my insurance approval. I called my daughter and told her the good news. She was genuinely excited for me. She told me that she was in favor of my getting the surgery, but that it was my decision, and she would support me in whatever I decided to do. Although I was happy, I was still cautious. I had to step back and focus on the fact that I was now 240 pounds, and in the worst physical condition of my life. I had done a lot of praying. No question about



*Catherine Jones 118 pounds ago.*

# Eat Healthy... for le\$\$

By Kim Lynn, RD, LD

*“Eating healthy is expensive. I just can’t afford to eat right.” These are comments that I hear over and over again. Now that money is tight and the economy is tough, these sentiments have become a recurrent theme. The truth of the matter is that, following weight loss surgery, you can’t afford NOT to maintain a healthy diet. Now, eating healthy does not mean that you have to make a big production or spend an excessive amount of money. To make the most of your food dollar, a little bit of planning can go a long way toward having meals that are convenient, healthy and yes – even inexpensive.*

*The following tips are intended to help you make the most of that food dollar when shopping. You want to focus on foods that will give you the most “bang for your buck.” Since protein is a main focus following weight loss surgery, and can be the most expensive part of a meal, this article will highlight economical sources of protein that can be found in the supermarket.*

eggs

1.

Eggs are an excellent source of protein, and are very versatile as they can be used throughout the day. They are an easy and economical option to meats.

When time is also a factor, they can be used to create quick meals. Some meal suggestions: omelets or frittatas, crust-less quiche, egg salads, deviled eggs and egg bakes.



3

3.

Although a little more expensive, tuna and salmon are packed with protein, less costly than fresh fish or other meats, and are available in a variety of flavors. Watch for sales and stock up. They are also very versatile items to keep on hand, as they can be made into salads, mixed with vegetables or beans, and made into patties.

canned fish



2.

Beans are truly one of the “super foods.” They are packed with protein, fiber, vitamins and minerals. The added bonus – they are extremely economical. They can be purchased canned or dried in bags. Their usefulness is not confined to stand

alone dishes, but can also be added to salads, stews or meat dishes. When using beans in combination with meats, you can use less of the meat and “stretch” your food dollar! Since salt is added during processing, the sodium content is one draw-back to canned beans. One way to reduce this sodium content by 40% is to drain the beans into a colander and rinse with water. The dried beans in the bag are the most cost-effective, but they do require more preparation time. So, it is a good idea to keep some of both types on hand.

beans



4.

Ground meats are typically a more economical alternative to whole meats. They are also, in many instances, better tolerated following bariatric surgery. Compare prices when shopping. First, check store flyers for sales; otherwise for the best prices. Then, compare between the turkey, chicken and beef choices. Very lean ground beef may have the same fat content (or even less) than the ground turkey thigh meat. Repeat; check those prices and see which gives you the best value.

ground meats



5.

While chicken breasts are the leanest part of the chicken, they are usually the most expensive as well. The breasts can also become dry and/or tough during preparation. Instead, try using boneless, skinless, chicken thighs as a more economical alternative. Another idea is to use a whole cut-up chicken or packaged pick-of-the-chick.

chicken

6.

Keep a variety of staple items at home that can be combined with the above protein foods for quick, tasty meals. Some suggestions of canned foods to keep on hand are: beans, tomatoes, green chili peppers, sliced olives, mushrooms, reduced-fat soups, vegetables and fruits in their natural juice. Note: Basic recipes can be completely transformed by the use of certain spices or key ingredients like cinnamon, garlic, basil, cumin, oregano and thyme.

The recipes that follow on Page 7 are pocket-book friendly, and combine high quality protein with some items from a well-stocked pantry.

a well-stocked pantry



Kim has included some recipe ideas that appear on Page 7.



# Spring Fashion



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# Is Surgery *the* easy way out



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By Kathryn Blanchard, LCSW

A provocative question, but a foolish one, nonetheless. Anyone can pose it – out of ignorance – but there is nothing ‘easy’ about it. How can dealing with endless diets, pills, and exercise that keep you on a weight loss rollercoaster going nowhere be considered easy? How easy is it to care for the needs of your family when the slightest exertion leaves you breathless? How can facing painful discrimination from society at large be anything but heartbreaking? For the morbidly obese, nothing is ‘easy’; certainly not successful, long-term weight loss.

In choosing weight loss surgery as a last resort effort to reclaim our lives, we have made a difficult decision to proceed on a journey that will require us to change our behavior – forever. We may face opposition from friends, family, and our insurance company, and that will be the ‘easy’ part. Once we have made it through the approval process, however, we must then face surgery with all of the fear and stress that it brings.



If we allow ourselves to question the decision that we made to undergo surgery based upon the fact that losing weight is a great deal easier post-surgery, we fall prey to what I refer to as the guilt of success. By verbalizing these feelings, they can be dealt with honestly. During my facilitation of NeWeigh’s Intermediate Support Group for the last seven years, I have dealt with variations of this emotional issue on numerous occasions. A full understanding of how we react to post-surgical success is critical to long-term recovery from morbid obesity.

Recuperating from surgery brings us face-to-face with the reality of a three-week, liquid diet. During this time of tremendous emotional and physical stress, one of our very best friends (food) is not there to comfort us. We must constantly remind ourselves that, in time, this, too, shall pass, and we will get some relief as we graduate to “soft solids” for another three weeks. Our eventual move to a more open diet, where we can introduce foods, ‘as tolerated’, is enthusiastically embraced. It is during this phase that we must focus on how to drastically, but effectively, change our eating habits.

Now that we have a good grasp of what, when, where, how and why we should eat what we eat, we are on our way to the honeymoon phase; it’s called that for a good reason. During this period of time, we generally find that we crave a diet of ‘good choices’, eating very small amounts of food, and feeling satisfied as the weight begins to drop off. It is during this honeymoon phase that some of us have been affected by that, “Is surgery the easy way out?” question. We may feel guilty, because the struggle to secure insurance approval and the surgery itself are relatively distant memories. Our minds become somewhat clouded by our success. At this point, it seems like we are shedding the pounds with little or no effort. When we start feeling guilty, it is important to acknowledge every step of the journey – from the very beginning.

We have worked hard, emotionally and physically, to lose our unwanted pounds. Use the honeymoon phase wisely; it is the ideal time to fully develop appropriate eating habits that will build a permanent foundation for long-term weight loss success. Each of us is entitled to enjoy and appreciate our accomplishments. We need to remain focused, however, on the road ahead, recognizing that the honeymoon phase will eventually end. When it does, weight loss begins to slow down, and it becomes more difficult to lose weight and to maintain the weight loss. For our own well-being, we should not concern ourselves with those who say that we took “the easy way out”, because we know better.

it. GOD had shown me the way to improve my situation.

I wholeheartedly believed that GOD would take care of me, and he would do so through my surgeon. Even strong believers get nervous on the morning of surgery, however, and I was no exception. The day that I arrived at the hospital I was greeted by a very professional staff that immediately set out to put my mind at ease.

After surgery, my blood pressure went through the roof, but I had a guardian angel named Valerie who stood watch over me, and held my hand for 3 days. She was the best nurse that I have ever had.

The realization that my life was, indeed, changing occurred on day four after returning home from the hospital. The limitations of a liquid diet were bearable because I didn't have to do it alone. My daughter, Venescia, went on the liquid diet with me which was a tremendous psychological boost. I wanted to avoid any type of problems, and to accomplish this, I surrounded myself with positive people, and ignored those who tended to be negative. I made certain that I 'went by the book', and the weight started to fall off.

Two years later and over 100 pounds lighter, I know that I made the right decision. My blood pressure, legs and knees continue to thank me every day. It's great to look and feel good, but greater to be healthy. When people look at me today, I wish they could see the person(s) [the physician, the hospital personnel, NeWeigh personnel, and my lovely daughter, Venescia] behind this person [me].

## Join Us for Some Tasty Topics

It's always nice when a plan of action comes to fruition. Most of you probably know about, and many of you have participated in, our new activity that commenced in early April of this year. The idea was to devote one evening per month to introduce NeWeigh post-operative participants to bariatric-

friendly foods, along with recipes and fresh ideas for healthy eating. Some tips and tricks for meal planning were also presented.

It's one thing to read a recipe; quite another to actually take in the aroma and taste the results of carefully combined ingredients – **Tasty Topics** served up proof that healthy eating need not be bland and

unappetizing. Patients from 1 year to five years post-op are benefiting from these delicious offerings. There is always something available for those patients who are on liquid and soft-solid diets, as well.

Positive comments from participants have included, "... [I] love learning new tips for meal preparation for the family."; "... [I] like trying new products."; "I can't believe the food tastes this good." to "I love it!"

We at NeWeigh are happy that you are enjoying the activity. We welcome you to join us again in the coming weeks ahead. Kim Lynn, RD, LD; Cindy Waters, RN, and Kathryn Blanchard, LCSW will be on hand, as usual, for some one-on-one face time.

*Bon appetit!*

### Tex-Mex Casserole

**Calories: 188**    **Protein: 24gms**  
**Fat: 9gms**        **Carbs: 4gms**  
**Sugars: 2gms**

- 12 ounces ground turkey (or lean ground beef – 96% fat free)
- 1 bag (8 ounces) frozen bell pepper, stir-fry mixture, thawed
- 1 can (14 ½ ounces) no-salt-added, stewed tomatoes
- 1 can (15 ounce) pinto beans, rinsed and drained
- ¾ teaspoon cumin
- 4 ounces shredded, reduced-fat, Mexican cheese blend

Coat large non-stick skillet with vegetable cooking spray. Add turkey. Cook, stirring to break up meat, until no longer pink. Add pepper mixture, tomatoes, beans and cumin. Bring to a boil; reduce heat. Cover and simmer 20 minutes or until vegetables are tender. Sprinkle cheese on top, return cover to pan and turn off heat. Allow cheese to melt. Serve with fat-free sour cream or plain Greek-style yogurt, avocado slices and salsa. Makes 6 servings.

**Calories: 185**    **Protein: 22gms**  
**Fat: 7gms**        **Carbs: 4gms**  
**Sugars: <1gm**

### Salmon Patties

- One 7-ounce pouch salmon (good quality, no skin or bones)
- ¼ cup light mayonnaise
- ½ small red onion, finely chopped
- ½ teaspoon Old Bay seasoning
- Juice of half a lemon
- 8 Ritz crackers, pulverized in food processor or crushed into very fine crumbs
- 1 tablespoon olive oil

Mash together the salmon and mayonnaise, add the onion, Old Bay and half of the cracker crumbs; blend well. In a small bowl, season the remaining cracker crumbs with a little additional Old Bay seasoning and set aside. Using a spoon, roughly divide the mixture into 4 slightly flattened "meatballs", and lightly dust in the remaining cracker crumbs. Place on a plate in the refrigerator so mixture can become firm.

Heat a non-stick skillet with olive oil over medium-high heat, and saute' the salmon patties until golden brown on both sides, about 4 minutes per side.

#### We will continue with the following topics:

Tasty Topic	The Woodlands	Stadium Drive
<b>Expand Your Horizons:</b> Great new foods you've probably never tasted	Wednesday Aug 12, 2009 6:15 - 8:15pm	Thursday Aug 6, 2009 6:15 - 8:15pm
<b>Eating on the Run:</b> Strategies for navigating restaurant and fast food menus	Wednesday Sept 9, 2009 6:15 - 8:15pm	Thursday Sept 3, 2009 6:15 - 8:15pm
<b>Everything You Wanted to Know:</b> About vitamins and protein but were afraid to ask	Wednesday Oct 7, 2009 6:15 - 8:15pm	Thursday Oct 8, 2009 6:15 - 8:15pm

# Looking for Help? You'll find it at **NeWeigh**<sup>®</sup>



Two Convenient Locations

## Houston Location Meetings

Pre-Surgical Preparatory Group meets Thursdays from 5:30 to 6:15 pm and every third Saturday from 10:30 to 11:15am.

General Support Group meets every third Saturday from 11:15 to 12 noon.

Basic Principles Group meets Wednesdays from 6:00 to 7:00pm.

\*Intermediate Support Group meets Thursdays from 6:15 to 7:15pm.

\*Advanced Support Group meets Thursdays from 7:15 to 8:15pm.

\*Tasty Topics gatherings are held the 1<sup>st</sup> Thursday of every month from 6:15 to 8:15pm for the Intermediate and Advanced Support Group.

## Woodlands Location Meetings

Pre-Surgical Preparatory Group meets every other Wednesday from 5:30 to 6:15pm.

General Support Group meets every other Wednesday from 6:15 to 7:15pm.

Tasty Topics will be held on the 1<sup>st</sup> regularly scheduled meeting of each month. Please call at the beginning of each month for the schedule.



## Houston Location

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Houston, TX 77054

Phone: 713.795.0200

Fax: 713.795.0300

## Woodlands Location

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Shenandoah, TX 77384

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[www.NeWeighWeb.com](http://www.NeWeighWeb.com)

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