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# Woman Loses 130 Pounds Months After Radical Stomach Surgery

By MATT GUTMAN and MARY MARSH | Good Morning America – Tue, Nov 1, 2011 2:21 PM EDT

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Woman Loses 130 Pounds Months After Radical Stomach Surgery (ABC News)

For the first time in as long as she can remember, Holly Matherne is excited about shopping.

"I like to try on different things, different colors, things I never would have picked up before," said Matherne, a 39-year-old nurse. "I'll wear white, light colors, bright colors. Maybe something with a little lower-cut neckline or shorter sleeves, or even sleeveless."

Watch the full story on "Nightline" tonight at 11:35 ET

Last October Matherne was a size 32. Today she's a size 18 and dropping. An addiction to clothes is replacing her previous

addiction: food.

In an interview with "Nightline" last October, Matherne said, "I've been fighting with weight since I was 6 years old. I've been on every diet, I've been to a nutritionist, Weight Watchers, reduce fat, reduce calorie, you name it, I've done it. I may lose weight here and there, but then it winds up creeping back on. It's all tied to emotion. I'm obviously an emotional eater."

Growing up, Matherne thought her personality could deflect attention from her size.

"I always tried to be the funny friend, be the funny person, crack jokes so people really wouldn't judge me by the way I looked," she said.

She tried to hide her weight in other ways, too.

"I was always the volunteer to take the picture, or I would be in the back," she said. "And the height helped me there, so I could always stand in the back so more people in front would kind of camouflage me a little bit."

Last fall Matherne weighed 370 pounds, and she knew she had to turn her life around before it was too late, she said.

"I want to be around, I want to meet my grandchildren one day, I want to see my kids get married. All those milestones I want to be around for."

After years of unsuccessful dieting, Matherne decided to have sleeve gastrectomy, a surgical operation to remove most of her stomach. The procedure cost around \$30,000 and is irreversible.

Dr. David Treen was Matherne's bariatric surgeon.

"The beauty of the sleeve gastrectomy is that the patients lose weight twice as fast as what we've seen with other surgical procedures," Treen said. "There is no question this is the single best option for

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patients who the weight has just gotten out of control."

The surgery takes less than an hour and sheds very little blood. A pouch is cut from the stomach and stapled shut, and the rest of the stomach -- about 85 percent -- is twirled out of a dime-size hole.

With that part of the stomach goes a hormone called ghrelin.

"Ghrelin is a powerful appetite stimulant," said Treen, "and when you remove this part of the stomach, most of our patients tell us after surgery, they're not hungry. Ever."

It's not unusual for a patient who's had the surgery to lose 100 pounds in six months, Treen said. traditional bariatric surgery. The long-term complications are unknown. The short-term results, however, are astonishing.

Last December, two months after her surgery, Matherne had lost 50 pounds, she said. As with others who have had the surgery, daily exercise and bite-size meals would be the key to keeping it off during recovery.

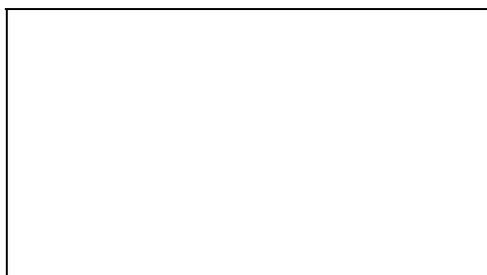


Photo on the left shows Holly Matherne last year before her surgery and on the right shows her today. Credit: ABC News

Now, her recovery complete, Matherne's portions are not much bigger.

"I'm full. I just had two little pieces of pork and a piece of sausage. So it was a couple of ounces, I guess" she said.

And when those around her have full plates, Matherne isn't tempted.

### Most Significant Milestone a Hug From Her Son

"If I want a bite of something, I'll let myself have that taste of it, but it's not like before, where, like, oh my God, I'd keep having to go back and I'd get more and more and just eat until I can't, you know, fit any more," she said. "Now it's just, I'm content. I don't let it control me. It doesn't consume my thoughts like it used to."

Matherne has lost 130 pounds since the surgery. She has also shed many of the inhibitions she said held her back her whole life.

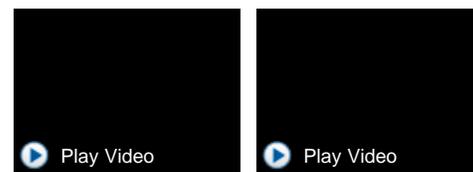
"I find I'm a lot more outgoing," she said. "I always thought I was outgoing, that I had a good personality, but I find I'm less hesitant in social situations."

An even more important milestone came from her son.

"My youngest came up to me the other day, and he had told me before surgery, 'I can't wait until I can hug you and my fingers touch,'" Matherne said. "The other day he came up to me and hugged me and was like, 'Mom, my fingers are touching! Isn't that great?'" [Return to the "Nightline" homepage](#)

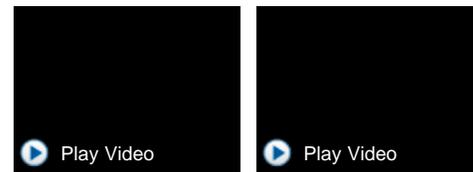
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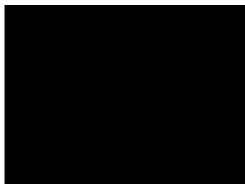
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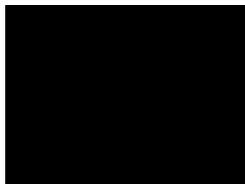
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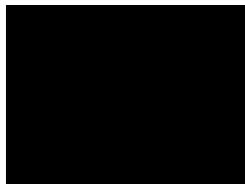
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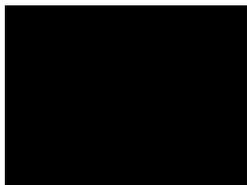
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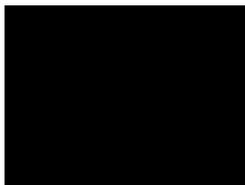
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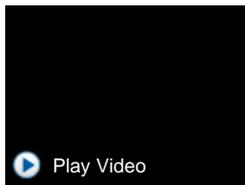
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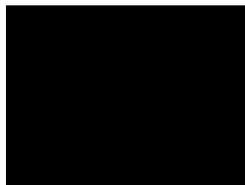
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Michelle 2 hours ago

33 1

I only worry because she is an emotional eater as I am. I had a gastric bypass 5.5 yrs ago and for 4 yrs kept off the 217 lbs I lost. Only to have gone through alot of hard situations in my life the past couple years and have gained 75 lbs back. So as easy as it is to lose it and keep it off for a... [More](#)

▶ 20 Replies

George about an hour ago

45 2

"Ghrelin is a powerful appetite stimulant," .....sounds to me like the pharmaceutical wizards need to get busy finding a way to control that beastly hormone Grendal...I mean Ghrelin.

▶ [6 Replies](#)

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Bob · about an hour ago

35   2

My sister is a success story like this she struggled with her weight for ever. Finally reaching a weight of 485 Lbs. Doctors told her it was killing her several times. Depression, and other health issues drove her to this radical surgery. She underwent this just over a year ago. She has dropped her... [More](#)

▶ [4 Replies](#)

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Mak · about an hour ago

32   2

I know that for some, this type of extreme surgery is the only hope due to either physiological or psychological reasons. My only question would be how someone who is never hungry or only eats a few bites can make sure they get the vital nutrients to keep their bodies healthy?

▶ [12 Replies](#)

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Goodbye USA · about an hour ago

20   1

A warning to Matherne, the weight WILL come back on if you do not change your eating habits. I had weight loss surgery 15 years ago and dropped from 320 to 165. Today I am 250. What happens is that over time, no matter how small of a stomach pouch they give you, it will stretch. Before you know it,... [More](#)

▶ [8 Replies](#)

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Ronnie D · about an hour ago

21   1

I had gastric bypass two years ago! I have lost 275 lbs!!! I love it...Thank God!!

▶ [3 Replies](#)

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Gravystop · 2 hours ago

49   5

Did surgery take care of the emotional problem?

▶ [7 Replies](#)

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Darryl S · 2 hours ago

31   3

This story is really encouraging! I'm getting ready to start this journey myself. My first class is later on this month. Here we go!!!!

▶ [5 Replies](#)

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Tam I Am · about an hour ago

45   5

People are so cruel. Why can't we have some compassion for people? It isn't like she is a child molester or murderer. The cruel comments obviously must come from people who have never had to walk in someone else's shoes in this particular instance. If you don't know what someone else is going... [More](#)

▶ [11 Replies](#)

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Rocketman1945 · 2 hours ago

24   2

In 1984 I had an operation called a vertical banded gastroplasty. In essence it restricted the flow of food into the small intestine and reduced the size of the stomach volume by pinching off a small portion of the stomach to be the receiver of incoming food. It worked well. I went from 310 to 190... [More](#)

▶ [3 Replies](#)

ODG about an hour ago

5   0

after my mom died last May, I took a long hard look at myself. I was 46 yrs old, weighed about 440. I had a hard time just getting off the couch. I'd sweat profusely...even while sleeping!! I joined a gym and I'm taking Group Circuit Training. Our trainer also recommended some new eating habits.... [More](#)

▶ 2 Replies

Josh 49 minutes ago

4   0

I just had the sleeve 1 week ago and I only hope i achieve the same results, good for her.

▶ 2 Replies

StartingOver about an hour ago

11   1

I had the surgery in 2002. I went from 300 to 145. I am like her in that I can be content with eating a little of just about anything I want. I feel better in my clothes and more confident in the way I look. There are other health issues that can come with the surgery though. I now deal with... [More](#)

▶ 1 Reply

Michael 2 hours ago

25   4

I had it done 4 years ago, I weighed 383 pounds and now weigh around 160, my whole life style changed and it was the best thing I ever did. at one point I was down to 138 pounds and had to put weight back on or get a feeding tube i'm now maintaining around 160 and have gone off all my high blood... [More](#)

▶ 3 Replies

Maxus about an hour ago

5   1

They always tout the benefits and never the downside of surgeries like this. Like the fact that you may end up having to take maintenance pills for the rest of your life, you can rupture your stomach, and must visit a doctor for the surgery for the rest of your days.

▶ 5 Replies

Vince 56 minutes ago

3   0

In january of this year, i was rushed to the hospital in cardiac distress. I weighed 410 lbs, and my blood pressure was 224/145. I had high blood pressure and congestive heart disease. My heart was working at 50 % of normal capacity. I could not even walk across a parking lot without nearly passing... [More](#)

▶ 3 Replies

None about an hour ago

3   0

PEOPLE NEED TO BEWARE OF THIS OPTION, My brother had complete gastric bypass. Yes he lost lots of weight at first, then his body adjusted, and he gain some back, and now has so many health issues from not getting the vitamin intake he needs. So be very careful, before thinking about this option.... [More](#)

▶ 1 Reply

Mary about an hour ago

7   1

i think this is great . anybody that would like to have the surgery should. food is an addiction just like drugs so why not get surgery to help out???

▶ 2 Replies

Tess 3 hours ago

7   2

WTG Holly! I am just starting this same journey. At the start I weighed a little more than 400lbs and am already down almost 50lbs just over a month and a half! I am hoping to look even more beautiful on my wedding day in May. The only downside is that I have to return

the wedding dress that I had... [More](#)

▶ 4 Replies

La Dee Dah 11 minutes ago

1   0

I work out 7 days a week. Intense workouts make me too sick to eat, so I drink water instead. I am always hungry, but my body fat is at 6%, It amazes me these stories of people with weight problems. Exercise hard for an hour a day every day and your problems will vanish.

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