

Why Weight?

Find out if bariatric surgery is the right option for you. Attend one of NorthShore's free bariatric information sessions offered the third Tuesday of every month from 6 to 7 p.m. at 501 Skokie Blvd. in Northbrook. Visit northshore.org/y3 or make an appointment by phone at (847) 492-5700 (Ext. 1206).

"Oh my God, it's amazing," exclaimed **Luisa Montenegro**, who credits her bariatric team for helping her drop 60 pounds, which she has kept off for nearly two years.



Healthcare for what's next.

From Size 14 to 2—And Loving It!

Bariatrics Team Helps Patient Slim Down and Perk Up

By Brian Justice

Luisa Montenegro's story is a common one among women who struggle with their weight even years after giving birth.

"I tried plenty of things, like different diets," recalled the 29-year-old medical assistant from Chicago. "I'd lose some weight but would gain it right back." After 10 years of yo-yo dieting, Montenegro—who is barely 5 feet tall—weighed almost 190 pounds, and it was having a serious impact on her daily life and health.

WEIGHED DOWN

"I had no energy, and I got depressed. My son, who's now 11, hated that I was down all the time," she said. "I didn't want to go out because I would get tired so fast. I'd even doze off during the day and wake up in the middle of the night gasping for air."

That was the tipping point for Montenegro, who made an appointment with Laparoscopic and Bariatric Surgery Specialist Michael Ujiki, MD, the Louis W. Biegler Chair of Surgery. After a comprehensive evaluation, Dr. Ujiki and the bariatric surgery team felt that Montenegro was a good candidate for minimally invasive sleeve gastrectomy, which permanently reduces the stomach to about 15% of its original size—creating a tube or sleeve-like structure.

"It's also been shown to decrease the hormones that make you feel hungry and

increase the hormones that make you feel full," explained Dr. Ujiki, who holds an academic appointment at the University of Chicago Pritzker School of Medicine. NorthShore's team offers patients several different options for bariatric surgery. "In Luisa's case, we felt the sleeve gastrectomy would provide her the best results, and it's done exactly that," he added.

FOCUS BEYOND SURGERY

Montenegro has lost 60 pounds—and more importantly, she has kept it off for nearly two years and counting. Now, at a healthy 120 pounds, she has dropped from a size 14 to a size 2 and feels like a different person inside and out. "Thanks to the whole NorthShore team, it was a breeze," beamed Montenegro.

Dr. Ujiki also credits his patient for her quick recovery and sustained weight loss.

"It's thanks to Luisa's willingness to participate in our multidisciplinary program, which includes working with dietitians to maintain a healthy low-fat diet, working with our weight-loss psychologists and exercising."

An added benefit is that Montenegro unknowingly had sleep apnea, which was aggravated by her excess weight. That, too, disappeared when she shed the 60 pounds. "Oh my God, it's amazing," Montenegro said. "I can do things with my son now. I feel great, I have more energy and I feel more confident in myself."



Laparoscopic and Bariatric Surgery Specialist **Dr. Michael Ujiki**

What's Next in Weight-Loss Surgery

Weight-loss surgery now has long-term, proven success rates through a variety of surgical techniques, including minimally invasive approaches. Join Bariatric Coordinator and Advanced Practice Nurse **Liz Farwell** for a live webchat **Thursday, Sept. 12**, from **1 to 2 p.m.** Tune in and submit your questions early on *Healthy You*, NorthShore's online source for timely health and wellness news, at northshore.org/y4.