

STAYING POWER

Helping people lose weight and keep it off for years to come



AdventistHealth
Castle

[Alicia Millard](#) attended Castle's free weight-loss surgery seminar in May 2015 and scheduled her gastric bypass surgery that August. Since the surgery, she no longer has diabetes, maintains a disciplined diet, logs in 22,500 steps five times a week and has lost more than 130 pounds.

"[Weight-loss surgery] has totally changed my attitude and given me a new level of freedom," Millard says. "I feel self-liberated. I'm a different me. If sharing my story encourages someone else and impacts even one life, I'm all for that."



STAYING POWER

The team, options and support you need to lose weight and keep it off

by Mele Pochereva

THE STORY IS A FAMILIAR ONE: Lose 10 or 15 pounds only to gain it back and try again, perhaps with a different kind of diet plan. This type of “yo-yo” dieting is frustrating, to say the least. For the 1 in 3 U.S. adults with obesity, the odds of reaching and sustaining a healthy weight simply by eating less and exercising more are daunting.

Morbidly obese people have less than a 5 percent chance of maintaining significant weight loss through nonsurgical programs, and this chronic health condition usually is accompanied by one or more life-threatening disorders, including heart disease, stroke, diabetes, sleep apnea and some kinds of cancers. The stigma and discrimination associated with obesity also have significant psychological and social impacts on one’s health.

Bariatric surgery can produce dramatic, lifesaving results, according to Steven Fowler, MD, medical director of the Hawai’i Center for Metabolic and Bariatric Surgery, which opened at Castle Medical Center 11 years ago.

“These surgical procedures are powerful tools to get you to a healthier place and should be considered as an early intervention for patients with diabetes and excess weight,” Dr. Fowler explains. “The procedures we offer focus on improving the body’s metabolism, such as how the body processes sugars and fats, to bring about enduring

metabolic changes that can result in the remission—or even reversal—of obesity-related health problems.

“It’s important to choose a program that is dedicated to metabolic and bariatric surgery,” he adds.

Best practices, new technologies

Castle’s Hawai’i Center for Metabolic and Bariatric Surgery was the first such comprehensive surgical weight-loss program in Hawai’i when it opened in 2006. It also was first in the state to achieve certification as a designated Metabolic and Bariatric Surgery Accreditation Quality Improvement Program, a testament to its successful outcomes. For over a decade, Castle has demonstrated a commitment to the community to provide bariatric services that equal the best programs across the United States.

“Since the program’s beginning, Castle is dedicated to providing a robust, multidisciplinary program to support our patients’ physical, psychological and spiritual needs, before, during and after surgery,” says Suzanne Asaro, MPT, MBA, the director of Bariatric Services at Castle. “Our surgeon, nurses, psychologists, dietitian, fitness specialist and coordinators work together with our patients to address all of their concerns and provide them with the tools they will need for long-term success in a supportive healing environment.”

Today Castle’s Hawai’i Center for Metabolic and Bariatric Surgery is the only program in the state that offers a complete array of surgical options for weight loss and metabolic disease. Services have grown and developed over the years to meet patient needs and adopt current best practices and new technologies.

Which procedure is best for me?

Choosing a surgical approach to weight loss is a significant step for each person after evaluating and committing to the considerable lifestyle changes required to ensure lasting success. It’s a decision that each patient makes in consultation with the surgeon and other members of Castle’s bariatric team, based on underlying health conditions, weight-loss goals, advantages and risks of each procedure, and other factors.

9 out of 10

The number of people who are successful in maintaining 50 percent or more of their excess weight loss following bariatric surgery.

Source: American Society for Metabolic and Bariatric Surgery

Where are they now?

CHECKING IN WITH SURGERY PATIENTS

Alicia: "I'm a different me."

Alicia Millard comes from a family with a history of obesity. By the time she was in her late 40s, both of her parents and her two siblings had diabetes and other obesity-related health issues, and three of her mother's sisters had died of the disease. Millard had been heavy her entire life, but attempts to lose weight always ended in failure.

"I want to be skinny," she told her primary care physician when discussing her interest in weight-loss surgery. At the time her weight was close to 300 pounds and she had diabetes. "He put me on diabetes meds and suggested that I try losing weight on my own if 'being skinny' was the only reason to have surgery."

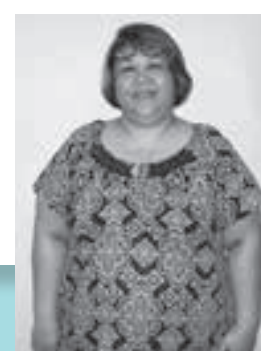
A year of dieting and exercising didn't help; she had not lost much weight and, more seriously, she had developed an allergy to her diabetes medicines. She and her doctor put weight-loss surgery back on the table, but this time it was to address her diabetes. Millard attended Castle's free weight-loss surgery seminar in May 2015 and, after meeting with Dr. Fowler and other members of his bariatric surgery team, she scheduled gastric bypass surgery that August.

To prepare herself, Millard changed her diet to the way she would need to eat after surgery. She told herself, "If I was going to do this drastic thing to my body, failure was not going to be an option." The day she went in for surgery, she weighed 280 pounds. Two years later she has reached her target weight of 145, and her diabetes is gone.

"Some people have criticized me because of my weight-loss choice, but they haven't walked in my shoes," Millard says, adding that maintaining her new weight is a daily challenge. "Many people have underlying issues—tragedy or other emotional challenges—that interfere with self-discipline and cause food issues that are no different than drug or alcohol addiction."

Millard praised her daughter Felicia for her support. "She called every day to ask if I did my exercises and what I had eaten."

Seeing the weight loss also has been a lifestyle motivator. Millard has maintained a disciplined diet and walking regimen. She broke her daily 7,500-step walking goal one week after surgery and now logs in 22,500 steps five times a week.



Each of the four procedures offered at Castle is performed laparoscopically, meaning a minimally invasive technique is used, with sophisticated instruments guided by a small camera through small incisions. Some of these surgeries are now performed through one incision inside the belly button. Advances over the years have made bariatric surgery safer with a lower risk of complications. Most patients can return to work within two weeks of surgery.

Gastric bypass surgery is still considered the gold standard of bariatric procedures. The procedure involves cutting the stomach to make it smaller, then bypassing a section of the small intestine. It usually results in the greatest long-term weight loss and brings about metabolic changes that dramatically reduce obesity-related disorders such as type 2 diabetes.

Laparoscopic sleeve gastrectomy, or gastric sleeve, is performed by removing up to 85 percent of the stomach to create a small, tubular pouch. This is a newer option that provides metabolic and weight-loss improvements close to the gastric bypass.

The **adjustable gastric band**, or Lap-Band, decreases food intake by placing a small restrictive band around the top of the stomach to create a small pouch above the band, leaving the rest of the stomach below the band. Just a small amount of food is needed to fill the pouch and satisfy one's hunger. The band can be tightened or loosened to change the size of the stomach opening, depending on the patient's needs. There is no cutting of the stomach or rerouting of the intestines.

The **duodenal switch** is a procedure that combines creation of a smaller-sized stomach pouch with bypassing part of the small intestine. Castle has the only program in Hawai'i that offers this procedure, and it is available only after

recommendation by the surgeon to select individuals based on their health conditions.

A supportive environment

Regardless of which surgical procedure they choose, patients can be assured that Castle's dedicated team of bariatric professionals is there to support them every step of the way until well after their surgery.

"All of our associates at the bariatric center, from the nurses and care coordinators to our dietitian and fitness specialists, receive education on caring for the specific needs of our patients," Asaro says. "We follow very stringent guidelines set up by our national accrediting agency, MBSAQIP, to ensure our patients receive excellent care and the top-quality outcomes that our program is known for."

If a patient needs an extra boost in reaching their weight-loss goal after a year post-op, Castle's "Back on Track" program can help. Patients meet with the dietitian and/or a fitness specialist to map out a personalized program to help them reach their goals.

"We really think of ourselves as partners in our patient's health," Asaro explains. "We're there to celebrate each milestone of their weight-loss journey and to provide a leg up if they fall off course."

Get the app!

Looking for information about Castle's bariatric surgery program and support services for our bariatric surgery patients? Download the free "Castle Bariatrics" app, available in the Apple App Store or Google Play, where you can:

- Find out about our bariatric surgery options.
- Download healthy recipes and fun exercise videos.
- Ask our dietitians and fitness specialists questions.
- Meet our program team.
- And more!

DOWNLOAD TODAY!

Why Castle Medical Center?

Castle's Hawai'i Center for Metabolic and Bariatric Surgery is a designated Metabolic and Bariatric Surgery Accreditation Quality Improvement Program (MBSAQIP) and is accredited by the American College of Surgeons (ACS) and the American Society for Metabolic and Bariatric Surgery (ASMBS). It also is a designated Blue Center of Distinction.

Other reasons to choose Castle's bariatric surgery program:

- We offer bypass, sleeve, band, duodenal switch and revisional procedures.
- Our surgeon is on-island, and emergency coverage is always available.
- We accept most commercial insurances, Medicare and cash payments.
- Our program is multidisciplinary and comprehensive.

78%

The percentage of people with type 2 diabetes who have their condition go into remission following bariatric surgery.

CHECKING IN WITH SURGERY PATIENTS

Josh: "I don't want to be big again."

Josh Hamilton has been big for as long as he can remember. The commercial pilot and flight instructor was a classic yo-yo dieter, losing weight and then gaining it back. At his heaviest, he weighed 305 pounds but still was able to pass his airline physicals.

A year after the Kentucky native moved to Hawai'i in 2013, the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) published an opinion piece linking high body mass index (BMI) with a higher risk for sleep apnea. Although Hamilton had not been diagnosed with sleep apnea, his high BMI put him in the target demographic for stricter health screenings. A month later, Hamilton attended one of Castle Medical Center's free information sessions on surgical weight loss. "I didn't want to risk my career," he recalls.

He liked the individualized approach offered by Castle's Hawai'i Center for Metabolic and Bariatric Surgery, as well as the program credentials—and a friend's recommendation. He underwent a vertical sleeve gastrectomy in July 2014. His goal was to get his BMI down to a normal level by dropping his weight to 174 pounds.

"I lost most of the weight in the first six to eight months and am now maintaining at 175 to 180 pounds," Hamilton says, acknowledging that maintenance is harder than the initial weight loss. "Surgery is a great tool, but it doesn't fix the emotional side of eating, and I was eating for the wrong reason: stress," Hamilton says. "Castle's post-op care is phenomenal and has contributed a lot to my success. Their team is always accessible to answer questions and is there for the rest of your life."

After returning to work, he took photos of his airline meals, and Castle's dietitian counseled him on which foods to enjoy and which to avoid. On his frequent travels, he uses hotel gyms for cardio workouts.

Hamilton knows it's a lifestyle he'll maintain for the rest of his life: "Now that I see what it's like not to be big, the fear of gaining weight motivates me. I try to keep a mental picture of what I used to look like, and I never want to be big again."



Spaz: "I still feel amazing."

His entertainment name is Kutmaster Spaz, but most people who know the nationally recognized re-mixer/DJ, multimedia talent and entrepreneur simply call him Spaz. For more than 25 years, he has had a big presence on the local entertainment scene.

By 2008, his "big" presence had grown to 337 pounds.

Spaz never had a problem losing weight, but keeping it off was a different story. He lost 50 pounds only to gain back 80; then he lost 80 pounds but gained back 110. It was after losing 110 pounds and regaining 137 pounds that he knew it was time for a solution.

"I was having a hard time breathing; I had high blood pressure, got back pains every time I stood up for more than 10 minutes and got swollen feet from supporting my weight all day," Spaz recalls.

Knowing Spaz's family history (his father had passed away from obesity-related diabetes) and the health risks associated with his dramatic yo-yo dieting, his doctor asked him to consider gastric bypass surgery for long-term weight loss.

"Like many others, I didn't know all the facts about having a gastric bypass and thought it was an easy way to lose weight," Spaz says. "I was never one for taking the easy way out of things, so I just said 'nah' to surgery."

But as he thought about how his health affected not only his life, but also his family and others around him, he began to learn more about gastric bypass surgery. He discovered that it wasn't a cure-all, but a tool for living a healthy life. After six months of research and hearing good things about Castle's bariatric surgery program, Spaz had a gastric bypass in March 2009.

"I didn't do it for vanity reasons to look good," he explains, "but to live a longer and healthier life for my friends and loved ones."

Since then he has lost nearly 140 pounds, and the health benefits have added up: "I have a lot of energy; I don't have to wear a CPAP mask to bed. I can stand up for over an hour without back pain, my feet aren't swollen and I don't have to take any pills, just my multivitamins," Spaz says. "It's been eight years since the procedure, and I still feel amazing. Castle gave me my life back."