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REAL PATIENTS. REAL STORIES.

Everything to Gain

VICKIE BROWN is living life to its fullest after weight loss surgery

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Vickie Brown's incredible weight loss is setting a healthy example for the younger generations in her family, including her daughter Kelsie.

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at Plano

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TUMMY TROUBLES?
When to deal and when to see the doctor **PAGE 2**

GUT CHECK

How to know when four common abdominal symptoms might be serious

TUMMY TROUBLES STRIKE JUST ABOUT EVERYONE from time to time. We talked to Houston Bogus Jr., MD, a gastroenterologist on the medical staff at Baylor Regional Medical Center at Plano, and put together this guide to help you decide when to seek medical care. As with any symptoms, Dr. Bogus points out that it's important to trust your instincts and talk to your doctor if you're concerned.



SYMPTOM: Heartburn/indigestion

GUT CHECK: Heartburn that strikes once or twice a week is most likely not a cause for concern. If you have severe symptoms and take over-the-counter medications for a week to 10 days and your symptoms improve, you might want to take steps to prevent heartburn (see sidebar). For heartburn or indigestion that doesn't improve, see your physician.

SYMPTOM: Bellyache

GUT CHECK: If pain lasts longer than a week to 10 days or is accompanied by loss of appetite or significant weight loss, see your doctor.

SYMPTOM: Diarrhea

GUT CHECK: Diarrhea is usually caused by a viral infection or a food-related problem and will clear on its own. If your situation doesn't improve with over-the-counter medications or lasts longer than three weeks, seek medical attention.

SYMPTOM: Constipation

GUT CHECK: Constipation is usually not problematic, since it's not associated with any specific problem. But if it's alarming to you, talk to your doctor.

Keeping Heartburn at Bay

Making some lifestyle changes can help stop heartburn. The American Gastroenterological Association recommends that you:

- Avoid alcohol, carbonated beverages, chocolate, citrus fruits or juices, coffee, fried or fatty foods, ketchup, mustard, peppermint, tomato sauce, vinegar, and over-the-counter pain medications other than acetaminophen
- Reduce portion sizes and avoid overeating
- Wait at least two to three hours after eating before lying down
- Lose weight if you need to
- Wear loose-fitting clothing
- Elevate the head of your bed a few inches
- Stop smoking



Do You Have Tummy Troubles?

For a referral to a gastroenterologist on the Baylor Plano medical staff, visit **BaylorHealth.com/PlanoDigestive** or call **1.800.4BAYLOR**.

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Allie Johnson grew four inches after undergoing surgery to correct the scoliosis, which had been painful throughout her adolescence.

Standing Tall

A teen realizes her dream—to finish high school with a straight spine

WHEN CHUCK JOHNSON OF MAUI GLANCED AT AN AD as he passed through the Dallas airport, he had no idea the chance encounter would change his daughter's life.

Allie Johnson, now 18, was 7 years old when she was diagnosed with scoliosis. In the early years, her curve was slight, but as she hit growth spurts during her teen years, it worsened. Her spine started to rotate, and her ribs would hit her hips during sports, causing severe pain.

Braces didn't correct the curving, and surgery seemed like the solution. But the doctor the family saw in Honolulu said he could only get a 50 percent improvement. "He said she'll always be deformed, and she'll always be in pain. That wasn't good enough," Chuck says.

After that bad news, Chuck remembered the ad he had seen for the Baylor Scoliosis Center. The family traveled to Texas and met with an

orthopedic surgeon, and two months later, in January 2011, she underwent surgery to straighten her spine.

"The first time I stood up after surgery I felt like a totally different person," Allie says. "I grew four inches." Since then, Allie has recovered from the surgery and graduated from high school. "One of my goals was to graduate with a straight spine, and I achieved that," she says. She's now studying film at the Vancouver Film School in Canada.

"It's amazing to see her stand tall, and her confidence level is amazing," says Toni Johnson, Allie's mom.

Michael F. O'Brien, MD, an orthopedic surgeon and director of research for Baylor Scoliosis Center, encourages people who are struggling with scoliosis to learn about the current treatment options.

"Severe scoliosis is a tremendous disability, and there's a huge amount of potential for improvement," he says.

10 degrees
About 3 to 4 percent of people have a spinal curve of more than 10 degrees.

Baylor Scoliosis Center

The Baylor Scoliosis Center treats children and adults, setting it apart from many centers that only treat children up to age 18. The center focuses on difficult revisions and reconstructions and is involved in many national and international research studies.

Call the Scoliosis Center Today

To schedule an appointment at the Baylor Scoliosis Center, call **1.800.4BAYLOR** or visit **TheBaylorScoliosisCenter.com** for more information.

Everything to Gain

Weight loss surgery isn't just for looks. It can treat a whole host of medical conditions, including *diabetes* and *high blood pressure*



Ten pills and one insulin shot. That was Vickie Brown's daily regimen before undergoing weight loss surgery at Baylor All Saints Medical Center at Fort Worth. The medication was necessary to manage her diabetes, high blood pressure and high cholesterol levels, and depression. These days, her medicine cabinet is looking sparse. "After the surgery, I went back to the doctor and they checked my blood pressure," says the 54-year-old Fort Worth resident. "When they said 120/60, I got scared. I had never seen my blood pressure that low." (Her blood pressure was in the healthy range.)

Brown's health issues were a big part of the reason she opted for weight loss surgery, but so were her five children. "I have a 7-year-old, and there were things I couldn't do with her because I could hardly walk," she says. "Now I have a lot of energy. I can go to the mall or the park and walk all day."

Hear More from Vickie

To learn more about Vickie's weight loss journey, visit [BaylorHealth.com/Exclusive](https://www.baylorhealth.com/exclusive) today.

Vickie Brown (seated) is able to do the things she loves with her family after weight loss surgery. From left: her daughter Kelsie, husband Cleveland, daughter Clevetta and granddaughter JaKayla.

If you are overweight—80 pounds or more for women, 100 for men—you may qualify for weight loss surgery. You may also be a candidate if you struggle with diabetes, heart disease or sleep apnea. Read on to find out how weight loss surgery might be able to help you get certain chronic conditions under control.

DIABETES

More than 80 percent of people who have type 2 diabetes are overweight or obese.

Brown is just one of many people with diabetes who have benefited from weight loss surgery. In fact, two recent studies showed that obese or overweight patients with type 2 diabetes who underwent the procedure fared better than those who stuck to diet, exercise and medicine only.

“Gastric bypass is shown to have a direct effect on metabolism and is shown to have a positive effect for those with diabetes even before weight loss occurs,” says Sina Matin, MD, medical director of the Baylor Weight Loss Surgery Center at Grapevine.

That’s because the surgery changes the way your body processes food, meaning you don’t absorb all the fat and calories you eat. Many patients, like Brown, are able to stop most or all diabetes medications.

HIGH BLOOD PRESSURE

Obesity and high blood pressure are markers for heart disease.

Excess weight forces the heart to work harder, which is why high blood pressure and obesity often go hand in hand, says Manuel Castro, MD, medical director of weight loss surgery at Baylor University Medical Center at Dallas.

The reverse is also true—a lower number when you step on the scale can equal a lower number when

you put on the blood pressure cuff. “Management becomes easier, and most people can stop most blood pressure medications,” Dr. Matin says.

And as the pounds come off, weight loss surgery patients find that exercise—a major factor in lowering your blood pressure—becomes easier.

JOINT PAIN

For every pound gained, you put four pounds of pressure on your knees and six on your hips.

Not only can weight loss surgery take the pain out of your joints (by lessening the amount of pressure placed on them), but it also can delay the need for a joint replacement. “And once a person gets a knee replacement, for example, it lasts longer,” Dr. Matin says.

Before the surgery, Brown’s back and knee pain kept her from walking more than a mile at a time. “Now I go four to five miles without stopping,” she says. “It made a big change in my life.”

ADDITIONAL HEALTH BENEFITS

Weight loss surgery helps other conditions you might not expect.

The list of medical conditions that can be treated by weight loss surgery goes on and on, and also includes high cholesterol levels, sleep apnea, acid reflux, some cases of urinary incontinence and certain types of migraines. It can lower your risk of cancer, heart attack and stroke, and even out hormonal imbalances, too, Dr. Castro says.

And let’s not forget how weight loss affects the way we see ourselves and our quality of life.

“Weight loss surgery patients gain the ability to travel again, to go places,” Dr. Matin says. “They have the ability to do things in society that were limited before.”

Are You Ready for Weight Loss Surgery?

To register for a free weight loss surgery seminar, visit

BaylorHealth.com/PlanoEvents
or call **1.800.4BAYLOR**.

Losing Weight, Gaining Life

Scott Noblett of Little Elm was born and raised in southeastern Arkansas, where “everything is fried or casseroled,” he says. Always struggling with his weight, he tried lots of different diets and often lost weight, only to gain it back over time.

As his 30th birthday approached and his weight reached 434 pounds, he knew he needed to do something. After extensive research, he decided weight loss surgery was the right choice for him. In March he had surgery at Baylor Regional Medical Center at Plano.

Since then, he has lost 108 pounds, well on his way to his goal of losing 184 pounds. He credits his success to the team members at Baylor Plano, and the opportunities they offer to learn strategies for success—from behavior modification classes to support groups to nutritionist consultations.

Before surgery, Noblett says, his weight was interfering with his active lifestyle. “Even with things as simple as going to the mall with friends, I could only walk for 30 minutes before my legs got numb from so much pressure on my back,” he says.

Now, he walks three miles a day and does deep-water aerobics. This year, he’s planning a trip he would never have dreamed of attempting before weight loss surgery: a cruise with stops to explore the pyramids and ancient ruins of Mexico.

“I’m so happy with Baylor for this opportunity to be successful and to live a better life,” he says.



Playing to Win

Baylor studies gaming technology as a tool for improving communication and patient care

EVERYONE KNOWS that misunderstandings can cause trouble. But miscommunication in a health care setting can lead to serious risks.

That's why researchers at Baylor Health Care System are joining forces with University of Texas at Arlington and the University of Texas at Dallas (UTD) to study how physicians and nurses can use video game-like simulators to improve communication skills.

"Miscommunication can lead to failure in the delivery of safe care, so it's extremely important to innovate and develop more effective ways to help our clinicians improve their communication skills," says Yan Xiao, PhD, director of patient safety research at Baylor Health Care System. He is co-leading the Baylor research team with Susan Houston, PhD, RN, FAAN, NEA-BC, director of nursing research at Baylor Health Care System.

Although it's similar in theory to a video game, the learning tool uses

even more sophisticated technology to create a simulated health care environment. Nurses and physicians will engage in scenarios they might encounter on the job, role-playing in real time to appreciate the perspectives of others.

Participants will control and interact with physician and nurse avatars and master interdisciplinary, patient-centered communication skills. During the training, participants take turns playing both roles.

"We think this perspective-sharing will be instrumental in helping clinicians

understand the best way to communicate interprofessionally," says Louann Cole, MHA, a research analyst for Baylor's Institute for Health Care Research and Improvement.

Part of the research has involved in-depth interviews with physicians and nurses, as well as an exhaustive review of communication strategies. This information was synthesized by game developers at UTD.

"Effective communication techniques are embedded in the game," Dr. Houston explains. "You get points for using those techniques when you're put into a patient situation."

The researchers hope the three-year study, which is funded by a grant from the Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality, will demonstrate the value of the technology.

"This is a fun and engaging way to learn," Dr. Xiao says, "and we hope it will help physicians and nurses work better as a team to serve patients."

Get in the Game

This study isn't open to volunteers, but to learn about research trials at Baylor seeking participants, visit BaylorHealth.com/AdvancingMedicine.

What John Janowski thought was a sinus infection turned out to be cancer. Fortunately, he beat the disease—twice!

TWO-TIME SURVIVOR

John Janowski
battled cancer
twice—and won

SEVEN YEARS AGO, John Janowski of Dallas thought he had a cold or a sinus infection. “It went on and on. I had pressure in my head and a sore throat, and my voice was getting raspy,” he says. His doctor prescribed four rounds of antibiotics, but the symptoms didn’t subside. After six months without relief, Janowski discovered two lumps in his lymph nodes. After a battery of tests, including a biopsy, doctors diagnosed advanced cancer on the back of his tongue and in two lymph nodes.

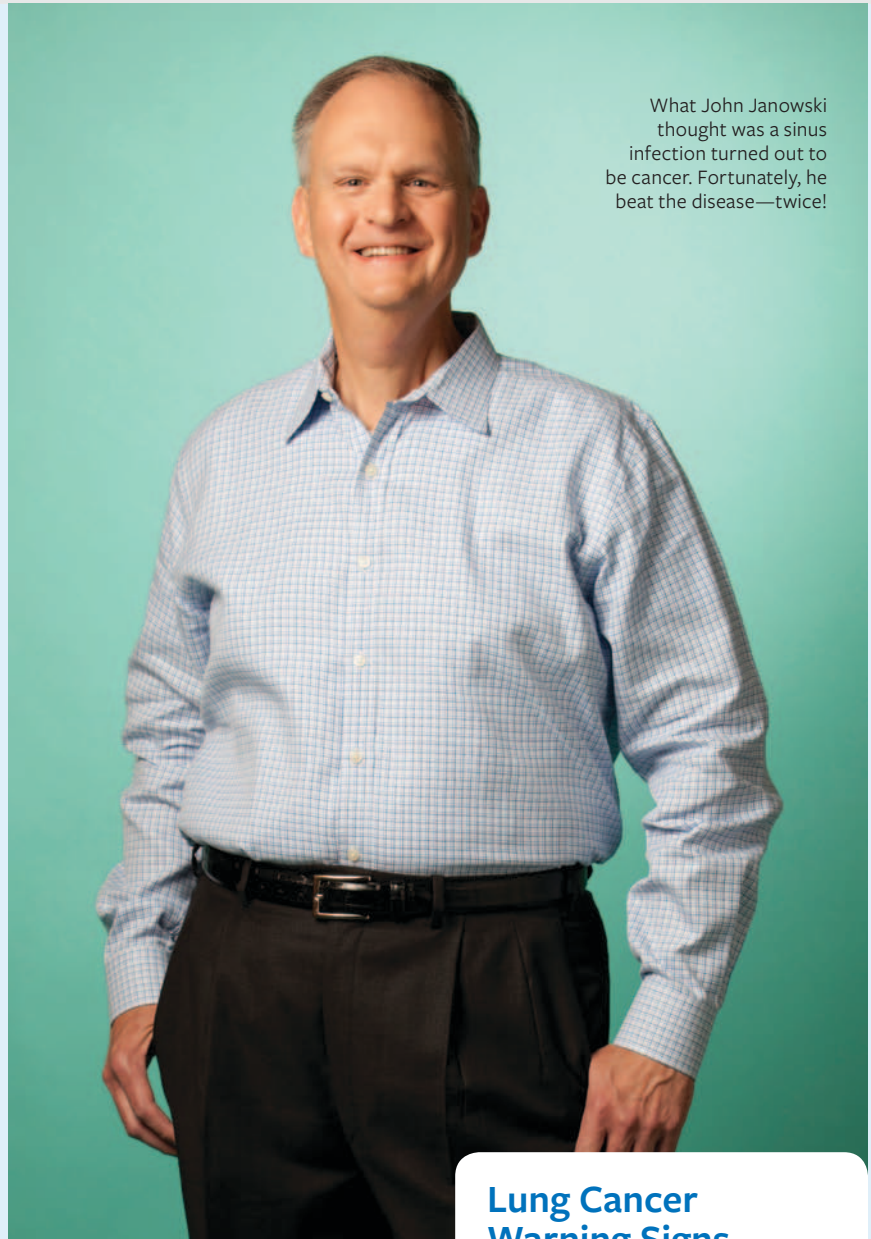
Surgery was the first line of defense. To get ahead of the cancer, doctors had to remove the mastoid muscle in the neck, 48 lymph nodes, the inside jugular vein and a salivary gland, and cut several nerves. After the surgery, Janowski had 37 radiation treatments and three months of chemotherapy.

“The doctors were very aggressive, which I’m thankful for,” he says. Recovery took nearly a year, including four months in which Janowski needed a feeding tube and several months as he worked to regain his sense of taste.

Janowski thought he was through battling cancer, but a scan showed it had spread to his lungs, so he had surgery and another round of chemotherapy.

His scans have been clear since May 2007.

Janowski, now 52, owns a consulting company. Managing his own business



Need an Oncologist?

For a referral to an oncologist on the Baylor Plano medical staff, visit [BaylorHealth.com/PlanoCancer](https://www.baylorhealth.com/PlanoCancer) or call **1.800.4BAYLOR**.

gives him the freedom to control his schedule. “I was a workaholic, working 80 or 90 hours a week, beating myself up and getting three to four hours of sleep a night. I don’t do that anymore. I have time to enjoy golf, photography, traveling and spending time with my family and friends,” he says.

Lung Cancer Warning Signs

Lung cancer usually doesn’t show symptoms until it is at an advanced stage or has spread, warns Mark Engleman, MD, a radiation oncologist on the medical staff at Baylor Regional Medical Center at Plano. If symptoms do occur, the most common ones are:

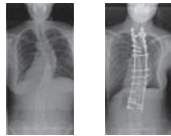
- Coughing, with or without blood
- Shortness of breath
- Wheezing
- Pain in the chest
- Fatigue
- Pneumonia

REAL PATIENTS. REAL STORIES.

“With a
straighter spine,
 I’m a more
 flexible mom.”



After years of crippling pain from scoliosis, Megan Wygocki had enough. “I was having trouble breathing. I couldn’t play with my kids. At times I couldn’t even get out of bed,” she says. Finally, Megan went to the Baylor Scoliosis Center. “It took me 15 years to find a doctor, but only 15 minutes to trust him,” she says. At Baylor, posterior spinal fusion surgery straightened her spine. “For the first time,” she says, “I could walk my son to school. Now, simple things make me extremely happy.”



Before After
 View of
 Megan’s spine

For more information, call
1.800.4BAYLOR or visit
TheBaylorScoliosisCenter.com.
 4708 Alliance Blvd., Ste. 800
 Plano, TX 75093
 1650 West Magnolia, Ste. 210
 Fort Worth, TX 76104



 Join our community:
 BaylorHealth.com/ScoliosisSupport

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Urgent Care at FieldhouseUSA

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For more urgent care information call **214.407.5310**,
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THREE PATIENTS. THREE CANCERS. ONE HOPE.