

November Is Diabetes Awareness Month

Jessica's Story

12-year Kaiser Permanente Kern County member, Jessica Maring, was helping her husband put a storage shed together. She recalls, as she tried to stand up, "Oh no! I can't get up!" She felt embarrassed to ask for help to get up. Battling with her weight since the birth of her first child 37 years ago, attempting various diets, with her weight fluctuating up and down, coupled with her petite frame of 4'10" and being in her mid-50's has been an overwhelming struggle.

In early 2019, Jessica weighed 202 pounds and sought help from Dr. Ning Huang, at the Ming Medical Offices. After review of Jessica's vital signs and lab results, showing her A1c at 7.4, Dr. Huang said, "You're setting yourself up for a heart attack and it's not if, but when." Jessica's fear really set in, "I want to be around for my grandchildren." They discussed Bariatric surgery and Jessica was referred to the Center for Healthy Living to attend the Bariatric Program classes, a requirement to become an eligible candidate for Bariatric surgery.

To manage her Type 2 Diabetes, Jessica began taking diabetes medication, Metformin, morning and at night. Jessica also took Lipitor, to combat increased cholesterol, a side effect of Metformin.

While attending the classes, Jessica learned about how food effects the body. She remembers being surprised at seeing small Ziploc bags, on a table, filled with sugar, next to popular beverages, showing the sugar content. Jessica discovered her three "trouble" foods: pizza, cheese and potatoes and learned to cut back and not completely cut out her "trouble" foods. Reading nutrition labels were taught. She knows if a loaf of bread says, "enriched", it really means added preservatives. These techniques resonated with Jessica. Now, she occasionally drinks an 8 oz can of Dr. Pepper, she stops eating when she is no longer hungry, and considers, "What can I live without?"

As the pounds melted away with the techniques she learned from registered dietician, Angie Kurtz, Jessica decided she no longer needed to have the bariatric surgery.



Currently, Jessica's A1c is 5.7, she's lost 72 pounds, her kidney function is normal, and Dr. Huang has taken her off all medications. She enjoys gardening, playing and running with her grandchildren, and says, "I can't believe I wasted all that time being overweight. Now, I have time for a healthier me!"

After ▶

Before ▼

