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Healthy Eating for 2012: Help from the Sudbury Bariatric Regional Assessment and Treatment Centre

Surgery reduces it from the size of a football to that of a golf ball. Later a person's stomach might expand to as big tennis ball – putting them on child's portions for life.

"Bariatric surgery is by no means a quick fix or the easy route," warned Registered Dietitian Kerri Loney. Complications range from nutritional deficiencies causing bone and hair loss to the risk of infection and even death.

"There are very significant, life-long side effects," she added. "It's not for people trying to lose that last 20 pounds."

But the benefits for the obese, those who have struggled often their entire lives to lose weight, are also great. After gastric bypass surgery, about 80%, who previously had Type 2 Diabetes will no longer suffer from the disease, many will no longer need their blood pressure medication, and less weight also means less pressure on joints.

Last fall the Sudbury Bariatric Regional Assessment and Treatment Centre opened in Health Sciences North's Sudbury Outpatient Centre. The North East LHIN, which provides annual funding to the hospital, supported the hospital's decision to move many of its outpatient programs and services to the Sudbury Outpatient Centre. "Priorities for the North East LHIN in 2012 include investing in care outside the walls of the hospital and improving access to primary care for those suffering with chronic conditions", notes Louise Paquette, North East LHIN CEO. In fact, the management and prevention of chronic disease was the focus of a forum held last fall in Sudbury by the LHIN, with a second forum scheduled in 2012 and the creation of web pages allowing providers to share best practices and tools on chronic disease.



Registered Dietitian Kerri Loney and Bonnie Mackinnon, Program Coordinator, sit down with a healthy portioned plate of food. Loney and Mackinnon are among the multi-disciplinary team members of the Sudbury Bariatric Regional Assessment and Treatment Centre, which opened last fall at Health Sciences North's Sudbury Outpatient Centre. The Bariatric centre, provides assessments and treatment prior and post surgery and takes referrals from across the province.

The opening of the Bariatric centre is particularly timely given the North East region's higher percentage of those deemed obese at 24% (compared to the provincial average of 18%) and higher rates of chronic conditions such as diabetes (8% versus the provincial average of 6.8%) and high blood pressure (23% versus 17%).

Loney began assessing potential candidates at newly opened centre in November 2011. Patients are referred by their primary caregiver to the province's Bariatric Registry which then links them by postal code to the nearest centre of excellence. The centre in Sudbury – the third of four to open in the province-- takes in patients from across the North East region. Besides assessments, the centre also educates candidates on the risks and benefits of various gastric bypass surgeries, which can both restrict the amount of food a person can consume as well as affect their absorption of nutrients. Patients will be seen pre- and post-operatively at the Sudbury centre, however, their surgery will take place at the St. Joseph's Health Centre in Toronto.

"We estimate that of the 1,000 referrals we'll see a year, that 250 to 350 will proceed on to surgery," said Bonnie Mackinnon, RN, Program Coordinator. "Besides helping patients, the centre will also act as a resource for providers."

The Centre's dietitians Loney, Teri-Lynn Marcoux, and Jill Schweyer talk to candidates about healthful eating as they prepare for surgery, and then after when they have to ensure that they get the right mixture of protein and nutrients into their much smaller stomach.

Following the holiday season --one typically marked by over indulgence-- they also had tips on ways all Northerners can improve their eating habits.

Healthy Eating:

- **Mindful Eating:** Be mindful of what triggers your desire to eat, said Loney. Are you eating because you're bored or upset or because you're actually hungry? Mindful eating also means savouring your food and spending longer to eating as it takes about 20 minutes for your stomach to register that it is full. And don't eat in front of a television or computer – that's distracted eating, the opposite of mindful.
- **Portion sizing and Plating:** Most of us are using plates that are way too big, said Marcoux. Opt for a smaller plate about 9 inches in diameter.



A healthy supper. Notice the plate of food divided into quarters: two-quarters for vegetables; one quarter for starches; and one quarter for protein.

- **Dividing the Plate:** Fill half of the plate with vegetables – ideally two kinds of vegetables that are two different colours. One quarter of the plate is for your starches – potato, rice, corn – and the other quarter for a protein. This meal can be accompanied by an 8 oz glass of milk and perhaps fruit for dessert.
- **Planned Snacks versus Grazing:** Loney recommends planning for the energy lull in the day by packing a healthy snack.
- **Eat Three Meals a Day:** This sounds very basic but many people, juggling hectic lives, don't actually eat three meals but graze all day on convenience foods. Healthy eating involves planning ahead whether it's stocking up on healthy snacks at the grocery store or packing a balanced lunch.

Quick Facts on the Sudbury Bariatric Regional Assessment and Treatment Centre:

- Primary Care providers can refer their patients to the Bariatric Registry by going online to www.bariatricregistry.ca. The average wait time for elective surgery is 8-12 months. Those with questions can call the centre directly at (705) 671 5611.
- The criteria for referral includes: having a body mass index (BMI) of 40 or one of 35 BMI but with significant comorbidities (diabetes, hypertension); has tried many weight loss measures; motivated and willing to make lifestyle changes; non-smoker; psychologically and medically appropriate for surgery; and willing to commit to 5 years post surgical follow-up with the multi-disciplinary team which also includes Nurse Practitioner, Physiotherapist, Physician, Social Worker, Psychologist and Pharmacist at the Sudbury centre.

For more information, contact: Cynthia Stables, Director of Communications and Community Engagement, NE LHIN, 705-845-1887.

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