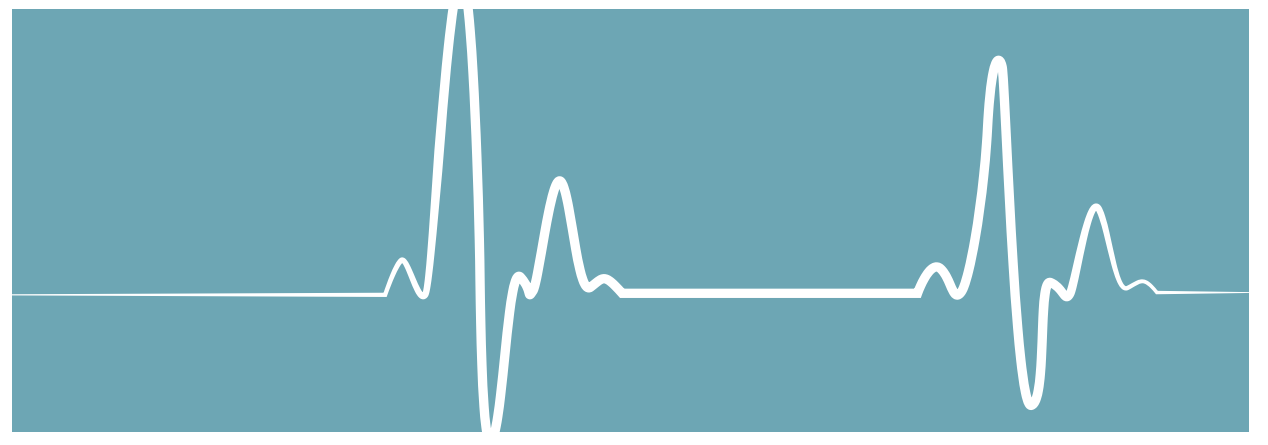


# HEALTH REPORT



## Metabolic surgery paves the way to health and happiness for a mother of five

"It's so important to care for yourself. Many people who are dealing with obesity think 'That's it. This is my lot.' They need to know they are worth it. You are so worth it. You deserve health and vitality in your life."

This is how Amber Redmer immediately responds when someone asks her the most important thing she learned after undergoing metabolic surgery (also known as weight loss

surgery). It takes a bit more time to learn the tremendous amount of change, some of it incredibly difficult, that happened during Amber's recovery post-surgery and the 110-pound weight loss that followed.

"My husband was diagnosed with cancer," Amber said. "When he started having symptoms of severe heart decline, we became concerned for his life."

At that time, Amber was a stay-at-home mother of five children, ranging in age from four to twelve. Amber homeschooled all of them. Her diabetes had gotten so difficult to control that she was on an insulin pump. Despite having the pump, she had diabetic rashes on both legs. Additionally, her triglycerides were high, which increased her risk for heart disease. Her doctors also discovered that Amber was developing tachycardia, an abnormally rapid heart rate.

With all of these personal and family health concerns, Amber researched her treatment options online.

"I didn't want to leave my children orphaned," Amber said. "I chose to have metabolic surgery with a vertical sleeve because it had the best digestion setup. With metabolic surgery, I would take fewer supplements and eventually I would be able to eat all foods that are normally included in a healthy diet. Most importantly, I would be able to come off of the insulin pump immediately after surgery."

After her thorough research, she entrusted her care to Dr. Denis Halmi, Medical Director of Sentara Northern Virginia Medical Center's Weight Loss Surgery program and a Bariatric Surgeon with over 20 years of experience in metabolic surgery.

### The science of metabolic surgery

"Many times, people with serious medical concerns shy away from surgery," said Dr. Halmi. "They are worried about the risks of surgery. The truth is that not having the surgery, and remaining in their current state of ill health, carries a much higher health risk than surgery. People with serious medical issues need to be encouraged to research the option of surgery and the benefits derived from surgical intervention."

Understanding the biochemical implications of metabolic surgery is critical for all people considering it as an option. Fatty tissues in the body cause a change in the body's overall metabolism. The change in metabolism caused by fatty tissues increases the potential for weight gain, regardless of food intake and exercise regimen. Metabolic surgery leads to weight loss because it causes changes in the body's metabolism that are inherent in the digestive system's hormone and enzyme levels.

### The personal journey of weight loss

While we are often encouraged to be patient with the weight loss process, those who undergo metabolic surgery see incredibly quick results. Amber was released the day after surgery. She came off of the insulin pump immediately, and her blood sugar has been normal every day since her surgery two years ago. Her resting pulse of 105 prior to surgery is now 70-75.

The results of surgery come fast, and that motivates people to keep going. While quick results sound like a dream, there are also emotional challenges that every patient must navigate in this process.

"All of our patients need some level of support in the journey after metabolic surgery," said Dr. Halmi. "The surgery causes a shift in lifestyle, and that means there is an emotional adjustment period. Serious adjustments can take place for the first few months, and then life evens out. People adapt."

For Amber, this meant rediscovering who she is. Prior to surgery, she was a homebody. After surgery, Amber's activity rate skyrocketed. She now does yoga six times per week, takes spin classes three times per week, and takes jujitsu three to four times per week. Jujitsu has become a social outlet for Amber as well. She competes every three to five months and gold medaled in the Ribeiro East Coast Championship.

All of this activity caused challenges in her marriage. Amber's husband needed to adjust to her increased interest in life outside of the home, and eventually he did once he saw how much happiness Amber derived from her new activities. In addition to her increased physical activity, she also started taking college classes. Her plan is to get a degree in criminal justice so she can work in federal or state government administration for the military.

To increase her support base, Amber started to attend a weight loss support group. She used to attend the support group every week and now she goes a couple of times per month. She intends to continue attending the support group despite her incredible and continuous results because the group helps her stay motivated and on track.

"In many ways, my life changed completely," said Amber. "Before surgery, I wasn't happy. I thought I was content, but I didn't realize until after my surgery how unhappy I was. Because of my surgery and the changes in my health, I am able to live more fully. Surgery has enabled me to live in a way that I wanted to live before my surgery but couldn't. The support I received has helped me to grow past the emotional issues that caused the weight gain. My life has totally changed. And my children are more curious and open to trying new things because they see me doing new things all the time."

Perhaps this last statement is the greatest testament to Amber's success. She had the surgery to build a bright future for herself and her children. And by all accounts, she is building that dream every day.



*Amber Redmer, Patient*  
Sentara Weight Loss Surgery Center

## Are you interested in metabolic surgery for weight loss?

Weight loss surgery can be a life-changing decision, and if you are considering it, you probably have questions. Sentara is here to help with a new way for you to learn more with an online weight loss surgery seminar.

Easily accessible, our online seminar will provide you with general information along with answers to the most frequently asked questions. You can now take this first step toward weight loss surgery in the privacy of your own home.

Sentara also offers weight loss seminars at various locations throughout Northern Virginia. During these onsite seminars, you will be able to ask one of our board-certified and highly experienced surgeons questions about procedures such as gastric bypass, gastric sleeve surgery or the laparoscopic adjustable gastric band.

Regardless of which seminar you choose to attend, either will fulfill the seminar requirement which must be completed prior to scheduling your first appointment with the bariatric surgeon.

**Find the answers you are looking for in a more convenient way.**

To access our new online seminar visit [Sentaranova.com/wl](http://Sentaranova.com/wl)

Or for more information,  
Call 1-800-SENTARA or log on to [Sentara.com/weightlossurgery](http://Sentara.com/weightlossurgery)