

Diana Hotchkiss

Before: 232 pounds



After: 182 pounds



My reason for going to Clinical Nutrition Center was to save my life. I was having medical problems with not having enough oxygen in my blood. I was finally referred to a pulmonologist and told I would have to live the rest of my life with 24 hour oxygen and a V-pap machine, a mini-ventilator, at night just to keep me alive. The doctor said my excess weight was a major contributing factor for my lack of oxygen. I took an immediate dislike to the doctor the minute he walked in the room so in my thoughts I decided to prove him wrong. I had previously been in excellent health all my life.

After a few days and a lot of conversation with my husband I decided to call CNC if they were still in business. I was a patient with them way back in the mid 80's and their program was right for me then with great success. Lots of water and circumstances have passed under the bridge since then. I started my current program January 4, 2008, at a grand total of 232 pounds. (How did I let myself get so big?) I chose the exchange plan which suited my life style.

My husband and I went on vacation in May of 2008, and I had to make all the arrangements to be able to fly with all the oxygen equipment and V-pap machine. What an ordeal to get all the clearances to take the equipment on the plane. Pulling the oxygen concentrator through the airport is no fun plus all the looks from all the people. Needless to say the trip was not as enjoyable as it could have been, but - I did not gain any weight.

For my 6 months check-up with the pulmonologist I had changed doctors and had another sleep study and had lost about 15 pounds. He took me off oxygen during the day but still had to have it at night along with the V-pap machine.

By this time I felt like I could get out and walk for a bit now that I could breathe, so I got our dog and off we would go for 15 - 20 minutes most days. I could even walk up the stairs to the bedroom without stopping at the landing to catch my breath. My knees were even taking a toll with the weight as they both have been replaced. One was due to a hiking experience on our honeymoon when I was young and foolish, and the other one due to an auto accident. I would plan my day and be so organized that I would have to do minimal walking. Fixing meals was a chore and my husband did most of the house cleaning because my knees hurt so much. I would put off grocery shopping until I felt there was nothing to eat in the house. (Nothing I *wanted* to eat.)

As summer went along I felt like being outside in the yard more and doing more things around the house. I have never been one to exercise but just being able to move around a lot more was great for me. By this time I had to get out and go shopping for clothes. My 24W pants were beginning to look like "gunny sacks". I first tried on size 20W and they were too big so went down to an 18W and they did fit much better. All of my tops were 2X and hanging on me. A new top was just a size 16. I haven't worn clothes this small for years. I do a lot of sewing so it was fun at first making trying to make some older clothes smaller until I just had to give them away and make new. It was amazing how much less material I had to buy to make smaller clothes.

When winter came all I had in my closet were the gigantic size clothes. I finally had to go shopping and found I had to look for a size 16 in pants and medium in tops. I have never had so few clothes in my closet that I could wear. I finally cleaned out my closet of all the big clothes and donated them to a group that helps low income women find jobs and then give them some appropriate clothes to start their work. Since I no longer work, I had a lot to donate.

Now it is a year and a half later and 50 pounds lighter and I feel like a new person both mentally and physically. I now want to get up in the mornings to enjoy the new day. I don't want hide in a crowd any more. I feel I am just as good as the next person. I now have fun shopping whether it is for fun or for groceries. I am more active than I used to be. I don't drive around a parking lot to wait for a closer parking spot but park wherever I can and walk. I still have more pounds to go and I will make it. I am off the V-pap machine and only a small amount of oxygen at night.

Who would ever think that weight loss would make a difference in driving a car? I used to have a problem getting in to my car and getting situated in the seat. Now I can get in with ease but now I have to move the seat forward just to reach the steering wheel. What a change!

Food is my addiction just like alcohol or drugs. I love to cook and try new recipes. I like the taste of food. It is my crutch. When I am sad or bored, happy or excited I want to turn to food. I am slowly learning how to break this habit by turning to sewing or walking the dog, working in the yard or going shopping to keep me out of the kitchen and away from food.

Having to be accountable for my weight loss has forced me to learn *not* to have 2 large helpings of food at each meal and what foods to choose. I never liked sodas or sweets so that part was not hard for me to give up. Keeping a food diary has been good, as at first I didn't realize how much I was eating. Now I have to be accountable for what I eat as I have to write

it down. I also include a few comments about my day. I now read labels on food containers and some of the old "comfort foods" go back on the store shelf when I shop. My food dollars have not gone down in proportion to my weight but they are buying more nutritious foods and more healthy food for my husband and me. He is even enjoying the food changes and wonders what new recipe will appear this week.

Thanks to all the CNC staff, my dietitian, Tracy, and Dr. Lazarus for helping me get my life back. I still have a ways to go but I know I will make it. You are a life-saver for me.