



# One woman's video journey through bariatric surgery

by Lisa Samalonis

**Dana Erbayri** is like so many people who have struggled with weight for years. At 5'4," 299 pounds, Dana says it upsets her that she has trouble keeping up with her two young children. She also struggles to manage her type 2 diabetes regimen. Recently, her doctor has doubled her dose of insulin, and placed her on high blood pressure medication. Now, she sees her doctor more frequently. "My doctor warned me that, at my present weight, complications from my diabetes are only going to get worse," explains Dana. "So, I decided to undergo bariatric surgery."

## ● A Peek at the Process

As Dana strives to gain control of her diabetes, she wants to help others in the same situation. So, she has decided to share her journey of weight loss surgery with the world by allowing a film crew to follow her through the process.

Videos of Dana's journey can be viewed on the web site [Bariatrics4Diabetes.com/WLS](http://Bariatrics4Diabetes.com/WLS). This educational resource contains information and tools to help prospective patients begin to resolve their diabetes through weight loss surgery.

"Understanding the process and knowing what to expect in advance may reduce those fears or doubts that keep someone from proceeding," she says.

Dana also wants to get the message out that surgery may be an effective option for other people like her with type 2 diabetes. "My doctor has explained that in about 77% of patients, diabetes completely disappears or treatment with medicine or insulin is no longer needed," she adds.



# Dana's Shoes

## ● Support Along the Way

Even with her lack of success with many diets and recommended exercise, surgery was not something Dana was eager to pursue. "Even when I am hesitant, I continually find support and encouragement to help me persevere," says Dana. One source of inspiration has been Pat Foster, a coordinator at Dana's medical center. Pat is an encouraging example, because she herself had successful bariatric surgery 7 years earlier. According to Dana, this strengthened her resolve.

Yet, Dana's children are the ones who have really inspired her to take action. "I cry my eyes out thinking I don't want to miss out on their lives because I'm too heavy, or because diabetes hurts me. I have to lose the weight; I have to do it now."

These feelings motivated Dana to attend an information seminar at her local hospital, where she met Pat, the bariatric coordinator. "Pat walked me through the risks and benefits of surgery from an empathetic perspective," says Dana. "That's a big help and something everyone who goes through this needs. I'm not hesitant to call her if I have a concern because I know she won't look at me funny. She's been where I am."

Pat relishes her role as a friendly driving force through the process. "We all get to know the patient intimately. I'll get to know Dana so well that I'll know what she's thinking. Then, I can respond to her questions before she even asks them. That allows me to be her number one cheerleader," Pat says with a smile.

## ● A First-hand Glimpse

"This surgery will enable me to be the person I want to be – a person who isn't afraid to speak in front of people, to get on the dance floor, or to walk into her children's school without feeling self-conscious," Dana says.

Still, every day, she says, concerns run through her head: "How will I look? Will I change so much I regret it? Will

people think I took the easy way out? What if something goes wrong in surgery? Can I get through the process of preparing for surgery, paying for surgery? Will I be able to stick to the diet changes?"

Dana's videos provide a first-hand glimpse of her entire journey – from contemplation and initial medical appointments through surgery and beyond. Viewers will see how Dana maintains the drive to handle setbacks and doubts as she works toward her goal. By sharing Dana's intimate moments with family and counselors, viewers may find their own inspiration and motivation.

The first episode of Dana's videos, which is on the site now, features Dana's decision to have surgery and her family's reaction to the announcement. Remaining episodes will be completed and placed on the site as she progresses through her journey.

Subsequent episodes will show, among other motivating milestones: Dana's visits to a support group, counseling sessions with her surgeon and a glimpse of the surgery itself—how quickly it is done and how quickly Dana recovers—and finally, the results of her surgery.

"This is my story," says Dana. "I am one woman who has chosen to make a change, to take back control."

Hopefully, as she finds motivation, she will help motivate you, too. ●

● To follow Dana's journey visit [Bariatrics4Diabetes.com/WLS](http://Bariatrics4Diabetes.com/WLS)

Besides Dana's videos, there is much more valuable information for you at [Bariatrics4Diabetes.com](http://Bariatrics4Diabetes.com). Learn more about the connection between bariatric surgery and diabetes, explore the various procedures and which one may be right for you, and even locate a bariatric surgeon in your area. [Bariatrics4Diabetes.com](http://Bariatrics4Diabetes.com) has the resources and support you need for this important change in your life.