

Jeffrey Johnsrud, MD Surgery, General & Bariatric

Congratulations on achieving Bariatric Surgery Center of Excellence. Why is it important?

It's taking all the elements for excellent care in bariatrics, from the physical plant being safe and clean and appropriate for obese patients, to the training and education of the staff on specific physical and emotional needs, and the surgical side, assuring that more than 125 cases are being done per year and outcomes are strong. It takes the skill set of a specially trained multidisciplinary team - a nurse coordinator, dietitian, psychiatrist, physical trainer and a caring office staff, all available for patients, from the preoperative teaching stage through post-op support.

Our staff is really great. As a result, our program is growing. Our group is doing about eight cases each week, virtually all laparoscopically, with zero mortality and almost zero complications. And, we're achieving great weight losses.

Why is weight loss surgery your passion? Obesity is a fascinating, multidimensional disease that's surgically challenging. For a general surgeon it's unusual to have the long and ongoing relationships with patients that we're able to enjoy.

How do you "walk the walk and talk the talk" for patients?

Two days a week I ride my bike to work from Newport Beach. I swim, surf, and work out at the same gym as many of our patients. I set the example for them that you can fit exercise into your lifestyle, even with a very busy schedule.

I have a master's degree in exercise physiology, and I'm in the process of learning to be an athletic trainer. When I'm too old to operate and retire as a surgeon I'm planning to train patients.

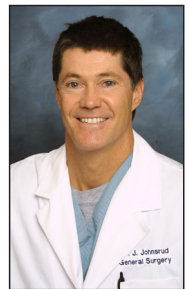
Tell us about a memorable patient.

There is one very sweet lady who was about 400 pounds and 5 feet tall, lived alone and complained of crippling foot and leg pain. She wasn't having much success until we finally convinced her

to do water aerobics. The weight started dropping and her mood brightened. She's developed the courage to make friends and get out of the house more.

About 20 percent of our patients fall into the lesson plan; it's almost too easy. For the others there is a lot of coaching, encouragement and education to get them to embrace this. Surgery itself is not a panacea, it's a tool. The best ones have worked hard to break through their old frustrations and demons. While the surgery is usually needed to control comorbidities, it's also gratifying to see in them an improved self esteem and a renewed zest for life.

While at the University of Southern California Dr. Johnsrud completed his undergraduate, master's and medical degrees and an internship and residency. He has practiced in Orange since 1987.



A PUBLICATION FROM THE ST. JOSEPH HOSPITAL MEDICAL STAFF OFFICE

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