

bound & determined

by Amy Morton
Spotlight Health

THE ROBIN JURIN STORY

At 310 pounds and gaining, Robin Jurin was so determined to get the BioEnterics® LAP-BAND® System procedure, she was prepared to go to Australia to get it. Fortunately, she didn't have to go that far. Through Internet research, she learned that clinical trials were being conducted in the United States, and that one of the sites was only an hour and a half from her home in Santa Rosa, California. On August 24, 2000, Robin, a mother of three, became one of the first Americans to have LAP-BAND® System surgery.

"After my pregnancy with twins, I just felt like there was no stopping it," says Robin of her weight gain. "I didn't see any end in sight. Everything I had done in the past had failed. I figured health problems were on the horizon, and I felt kind of hopeless." That was until she found out about this weight loss surgery procedure. "I thought, 'This is exactly what I need.' I knew that my main problem was that I ate too much. I was trying to eat healthy, but the portions were still really large."

Three years later, and 151 pounds lighter, Robin, 31, says that patience and determination were the most important ingredients to her success. "I always believed this would work," she says. "I never doubted it. I never gave up." Easier said than done, as is usually the case. Three months after surgery, she found herself up six pounds. In an unusual case, her new band was not yet increasing her restriction. She could eat as much as she had before surgery.



But Robin never doubted that she would get things on track, or that the band would work for her once it was adjusted. "That's the great thing about the band," she says. "It's adjustable to your habits, adjustable to what you need physically. I started losing weight really rapidly once I got a proper adjustment." To date, Robin has had seven band adjustments, her last one almost two years ago. "That has taken me all the way to where I am today," she says.

Not that there weren't plateaus – two long ones that lasted about six months each. "I learned to wait them out," she says. "When I was plateauing, my body was usually going through other things. I would drop sizes even though I wasn't losing any weight." She also found that just like her band, her attitude had to be adjusted. "I did a lot of accepting about where I was and how far I had come," she says. "I started looking at other things. What can I do to add to my well being? Can I drink more water, exercise a little more? That crowded out any negative behavior."

Robin not only overcame the plateaus, but she eventually exceeded her wildest expectations. "When I got down to 232 pounds, where I was when I graduated high school, that was a big deal," she says. "I had done so much damage in adulthood, it almost gave me a new place to start again. Then getting under 200 [in May 2002] was huge. It opened up all these new possibilities. I realized not only that the band was working, but

I had my own part in facilitating my success. I had made a lot of positive changes and with that, I was able to lower my goal, and take it even further.”

In February of 2004, Robin hit 159 pounds (BMI 23.5). She'd made it, and then some. “If you'd asked what would be the lowest weight I ever thought I'd get to, I would have told you 170 or 165,” she says. “The journey just seems to keep on going. I'm still big for an average woman, but I feel very proportioned. I feel fairly fit. I'm happy where I am. Anything else would just be a bonus, and there are just other areas now, to focus on.” Like her young children, for starters, age 6, 4, and 4 (twins).

“At my heaviest weight, with a toddler and two babies, I was overwhelmed, and tired and out of breath,” says Robin. “Just going up the stairs was a big deal. I can't even imagine doing the things that I do with them now. I walk around the block with my kids. I go bike riding with them. I think that their quality of life, with me as a parent, has significantly improved. In the past, I had a lot of junk food in the house. I would have watched a lot more TV. Now I lead a completely different lifestyle that I'm hoping will carry on to them. I see how it has already.”

A pioneering bandster and an inspiration to many within the Spotlight Health community, Robin was recently chosen by INAMED, the manufacturer of the LAP-BAND® System, to be featured in a national television commercial that will air in several markets. She and her family were flown to Southern California, where they got to visit Disneyland in their time off. “It was such an honor and such an amazing experience,” she says. “I wish every post-op could go through that, to have so much validation for everything that you've gone through.”



As for Robin's future, it's difficult to say, the possibilities are so numerous. “I feel like I'm free to have a lot of choices now,” she says. “I don't feel as confined as I did.” She also credits her weight loss with clearing her mental plate. “I used to expend a lot of energy worrying about weight, dieting, being fat,” she says. “Now I have all this free thinking space.” Thanks to her dramatic weight loss, today Robin is **unbound but still determined.** ■

Amy Morton is a writer and marketing communications professional based in Los Angeles. She holds a BA in English from the University of Virginia. This article has been reprinted courtesy of Spotlight Health. Visit www.spotlighthealth.com for more success stories like this one, and to connect with other pre-op and post-op WLS patients.