

The Art of LOSING

Dr. Aparna Chandrasekaran of Jersey Medical Weight Loss Center eases the burden for individuals who are struggling with weight issues.

by JENNY GRAHAM photography by JODY ROBINSON

Obesity in the United States has swelled to epidemic proportions. In 2016, obesity affected nearly 40 percent of American adults, or approximately 93.3 million people, according to the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Obesity can cause a number of life-threatening health conditions, including heart disease, stroke, and sleep apnea.

But there is hope, according to Aparna Chandrasekaran, M.D., founder and medical director of Jersey Medical Weight Loss Center in Somerset, N.J. For patients who are concerned that they may be on the verge of this epidemic, Dr. Chandrasekaran recommends first and foremost that the patient see a qualified medical professional.

"It is much easier to prevent issues than to treat them, so I certainly suggest looking into medical management of weight-related issues sooner rather than later," she says. "Have your doctor determine your BMI, or body mass index. This is an important tool and will help determine what type of treatment you need. Start by going for a physical, because this will bring to light often overlooked

issues such as high cholesterol or blood sugar."

In many cases, obesity may be the result of genetics. Regardless of the cause, Dr. Chandrasekaran emphasizes that no one should be embarrassed or ashamed about a weight issue. While a dietitian, a nutritionist, or a personal trainer can start a person down the path to better health, she says one must seek out the expertise of an Obesity Medicine specialist, also called as Bariatric Physician, such as herself to bring the weight down effectively in a healthy manner and also to keep it off.

At Jersey Medical Weight Loss Center, a patient's weight loss journey begins with a comprehensive diagnostic workup, wherein Dr. Chandrasekaran and her team compute a patient's body composition using a special scale. This helps to "get to the root" of a patient's weight problem, she says. From there, she designs a purely customized treatment plan focused on nutritional intervention, weight loss medication, supplements, and behavioral counseling.

"I prescribe many FDA-approved medications for weight loss, as well as lipotropic vitamin supplements designed to boost patients' metabolism," she notes.

A human connection is vitally important to the success of the weight loss process. That being said, Dr. Chandrasekaran and her staff work together to make the path to weight loss as smooth as possible, focusing on all aspects of a person's life—not just the numbers on the scale.

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"There are many issues that can impact a patient's weight; they may have a sick child, or problems at work, or other stressors," she says. "All of that will affect weight. Patients need a lot of TLC. We strive hard to make every patient feel well attended, and ours is definitely a team effort."

Dr. Chandrasekaran, who is board certified in both Internal Medicine and Obesity Medicine, has been practicing Internal Medicine in New Jersey since 2004.

She is a member of Obesity Medicine Association, and is actively involved in spreading awareness about obesity through her blogs, radio show, and presentations. Her article "Body Mass Index: Is It Reliable Indicator of Obesity?" was published in the *Journal of Nutrition & Weight Loss* in February 2018.

"In the past, there were not many FDA-approved weight-loss medications available," she says. "Now, there are a few FDA-approved medicines which are very effective, and there are more in the pipeline. The new things coming up make us as practitioners even more optimistic."

Dr. Chandrasekaran utilizes the latest aesthetic treatments, including CoolSculpting and Kybella, to help patients get rid of the stubborn fat and attain the ideal body to complement their weight loss.

CoolSculpting is an FDA-cleared body-contouring treatment designed to address the stubborn areas of fat still present after a patient has lost weight, including the arms, chin, stomach, and thighs. It is scientifically proven, safe and noninvasive. Treatments last 30 to 75 minutes and, most exciting for patients, require no "downtime" after a procedure.

Kybella is an FDA-cleared injectable treatment for double chin. The treatment is administered in the office in just 15 to 20 minutes. As with CoolSculpting, the treatment has no downtime of which to speak.

"It is very gratifying to see how many patients' lives improve with weight loss," Dr. Chandrasekaran says. "Patients have come off their blood pressure and diabetic medications, and many say they look and feel younger. Above all, they are on the path to a healthier life." ■



Each patient receives a customized treatment plan from Dr. Chandrasekaran and her staff.



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