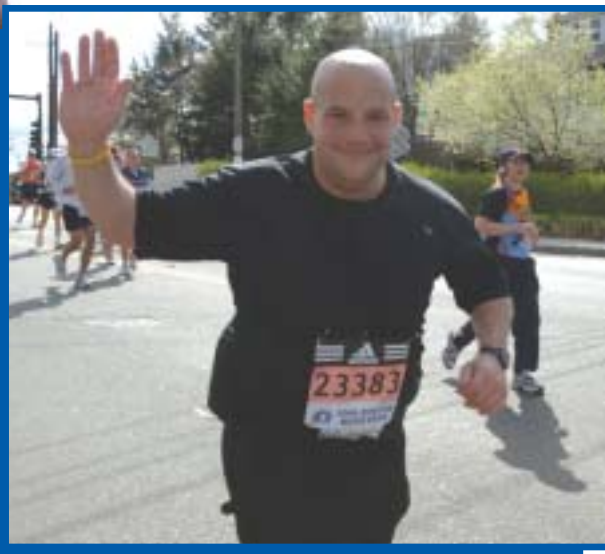


# Newton-Wellesley Hospital Gastric Bypass

## Patient Completes Third Boston Marathon



Five years ago, John Tiso (*above*) never imagined walking to the end of his driveway. Now, after finishing his seventh marathon, he knows anything is possible. At 458 pounds, John worried he wouldn't have the chance to see his children grow-up, but after undergoing gastric bypass surgery in 2001 at Newton-Wellesley Hospital, the future holds many possibilities.

After his surgery, John's surgeon suggested he start walking. After barely being able to make it to his mailbox, John began to walk with ease. When walking was no longer a challenge, he decided to start running. And he hasn't stopped since... John has run the New York City Marathon three times and the Disney Marathon once, but the event that is closest to his heart is the Boston Marathon, which he ran in 2004, 2005 and 2006.

"The Boston is special because it is quite an emotional experience for me," says John. "To pass by Newton-Wellesley Hospital the last three years, I am reminded of the more than 200 pound weight loss I have maintained."

Now, a lighter and happier John enjoys spending time with his family and taking part in activities he never thought possible. "I can do things now that I never thought I would be able to do... little things like fitting in an airplane seat or walking around without pain," says John. "My main reason for running the Disney Marathon, was the last time I was at Disney, while I still had all the weight, I could barely walk. I had to sit on every bench I could find."

While John's quality of life has improved, he says people should not be embarrassed about being overweight.

"I would say not to be ashamed, but also not to necessarily accept or deny the condition. Each person must take responsibility for their own health and well being."

The guidance of physicians at Newton-Wellesley Hospital like surgeon, Pablo Gazmuri, MD, has helped John with his weight-loss goals. Dr. Gazmuri is pleased to see John taking part in activities that once seemed impossible.

"When the staff first met John, he was morbidly obese – his life was in danger," says Dr. Gazmuri. "I am glad to see he is accomplishing his health goals and acting as a role model for others who are in the same position. The most important thing is that he has greatly reduced the prevalence of the life-threatening co-morbidities (*see sidebar article*) that are associated with obesity and he is leading a much healthier life."

Now, John is looking forward to a long and healthy life. "My future running goals are to increase my speed and lower my body fat," adds John. "Overall, my whole life has changed. Before the surgery, I was convinced I would die from the morbid obesity. I was depressed and angry. I now am a happier, healthier person. I enjoy spending time with my family. I feel like a 'new man.'"

Newton-Wellesley Hospital surgeons have been performing gastric bypass surgery for more than 10 years. The Hospital is currently in the process of receiving accreditation for a Bariatric Center of Excellence. The Hospital has received its provisional certification and will be accredited after an official site visit in the coming months. The Center of Excellence will continue to focus on a multi-disciplinary approach, which has been in place since the inception of the program at the Hospital. The team consists of three physicians, nurses, social services, nutrition and other staff members who assure successful recoveries for surgery patients.

The surgeons have already had great success with the program and average approximately 400 surgeries a year with an 95 percent success rate, defined as a patient who loses 65 percent of his or her excess weight and maintains that weight loss. The obesity program is comprehensive and involves nutrition education and counseling, psychological counseling, peer support groups, long-term medical follow up and state-of-the-art hospital services – each vital to the success of the patient.

“The Center of Excellence pursuit by Newton-Wellesley is the logical culmination of the past nine years of effort,” says Bruce Thayer, MD, Assistant Chair of Surgery at Newton-Wellesley Hospital. “In a sense, it represents the ‘coming of age’ of the program. Patients have a right to the best possible care when they are morbidly obese and the Center of Excellence concept is an important key to assuring that quality is present in a particular program.”

Bariatric surgery is considered an option for people who weigh more than 100 pounds over their ideal body weight, have a body mass index (BMI) of 40 or have a BMI of 35 to 40 with the presence of serious co-morbid conditions.

Sheila Partridge, MD, Medical Director of the Center is excited about the future and the services it will offer to patients. “We bring patients from throughout New England to receive this surgery at Newton-Wellesley Hospital,” says Dr. Partridge. “We already have the model in place, but we are now transitioning to a hospital-based program, which will include more education for all the hospital staff and access for these patients to other ancillary departments throughout the hospital.”

Dr. Gazmuri is also looking forward to being accredited as a Center of Excellence. “We are always striving to do things better and increase the level of care we can offer to our patients,” says Dr. Gazmuri. “We hope to increase communication with various areas throughout the hospital and provide a multidisciplinary approach to each patient’s surgery.”

With the current trends toward obesity, Dr. Partridge sees this program continuing to expand in the future. “In the early 1990s, surgeons were performing approximately 16,000 gastric bypass surgeries a year; however, that number had risen to about 200,000 in 2002. Eleven million people in the United States are morbidly obese. This surgery is just a tool towards weight loss. Our patients must make lifestyle changes and continue to follow up with medical professionals and support groups in order to achieve long-term success.”

**For more information about bariatric surgery at Newton-Wellesley, call CareFinder at (866) NWH-DOCS (694-3627).**

## Health Risks of Morbid Obesity

The added weight of morbid obesity can stress many other systems within the human body causing conditions known as co-morbidities – diseases acquired in addition to obesity. These obesity-related health conditions can significantly reduce life expectancy and affect quality of life. Some of the common conditions include:

### Type 2 Diabetes

Obese individuals develop a resistance to insulin, which regulates blood sugar levels. Over time, the resulting high blood sugar can cause serious damage to the body.

### High Blood Pressure and Heart Disease

Excess body weight strains the ability of the heart to function properly. The resulting high blood pressure can result in strokes and significant heart and kidney damage.

### Osteoarthritis of Weight-bearing Joints

Additional weight placed on joints, particularly knees and hips, results in rapid wear and tear, along with pain caused by inflammation. Bones and muscles of the back are constantly strained, resulting in disk problems, pain and decreased mobility.

### Sleep Apnea and Respiratory Problems

Fat deposits in the tongue and neck can cause intermittent obstruction of the air passage. Because the obstruction is increased when sleeping on your back, you may find yourself waking frequently to reposition. The resulting loss of sleep often results in daytime drowsiness and headaches.

### Gastroesophageal Reflux and Heartburn

Acid belongs in the stomach and seldom causes any problems when it stays there. However, when acid escapes into the esophagus through a weak or overloaded valve at the top of the stomach, the result is called gastroesophageal reflux with “heartburn” and acid indigestion as common symptoms. Approximately 10 to 15 percent of patients with even mild sporadic symptoms of heartburn will develop a condition called Barrett’s esophagus, which is a pre-malignant change in the lining membrane of the esophagus, a cause of esophageal cancer. For more information on heartburn, its causes and possible cures, visit [www.heartburnhelp.com](http://www.heartburnhelp.com).