

## Robin Blackstone, M.D.

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**Issue:** April, 2010, Page 198

**Robin Blackstone, M.D.**  
**Specialty:** Bariatric Surgery  
**Years practicing:** 14  
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### **Why did you become a bariatric surgeon?**

Around the time I met my husband his sister got bariatric surgery. I was really impressed with what happened with her life and medical problems. One of my colleagues really wanted to learn how to do the surgery laparoscopically and, wow, I don't know what it was about this group of patients. They were discriminated against and incredible underdogs. It was like the last group of people you could be mean to. When I saw this, I had to do something about this. It was a calling.

### **How do you feel about celebrities promoting gastric bypass surgery?**

[Singer] Carnie Wilson probably changed the perception about gastric bypass almost more than any other. In 1999, she appeared on the cover of People magazine, and up until that moment there were so many people suffering from obesity that had no help. Patients were in complete despair over their situation. They didn't even know it was available. The other thing that happened through the experience is that they have demonstrated how difficult obesity is to treat.

### **Do you ever suggest a different way for someone to lose weight than surgery?**

In our Balance program, we teach learning behaviors with nutritionists and exercise folks and psychiatrists. It advocates that people should learn very good behavioral skills to embrace change. I hope they can lose the weight without surgery.

### **Has a patient ever come back and said the surgery didn't work?**

There are times when a patient comes back and says they're regaining weight. The most important thing is that they come back. If we determine the problem is more behavior related, then it's great to have a community that can get around this person and help them understand why. Sometimes their life is so crazy that they never got on the exercise bandwagon. Some patients come back and they want something to be wrong with their bypass so we can fix it, but it's because they're not relating it well.