

Journal-

10/15/09

Let's put it this way. I've never been "thin". I have always been up and down with my weight my whole life. Was on Weight Watchers at 11 yrs old for heaven sake! I have always been self conscious about my stomach pooching out ever since I was a young girl.

After having 2 pregnancies, and 2 C-Sections the stomach pooch was now worse and not only that but my skin was stretched out and was "hanging" over the C-section scar. Not exactly what I would call attractive, and my hips somehow had decided that they were going to stay fuller than they have ever been. Having kids is wonderful, but my body didn't seem to think so.

I finally decided that it was time for a life change. I started eating "cleaner" and healthier and began exercising more regularly and I began to lose weight, 20lbs to be exact. It came off in 4 months and I was dedicated to keeping it off forever.

Fast forward 2 years, I am now thinner than I was in high school. I finally fit into a size 0/2. It's funny even though you get to that "magic" number on the scale and the magic size in clothes...I still find myself staring in the mirror and not liking what I see. I could lose more weight, but according to Weight Watchers I AM at my goal weigh!! My Mother is already asking me if I am eating enough (which I have to laugh and say YES Mom, I am eating plenty, just eating better). But it doesn't matter how much more weight I lose, it only comes off in my face and in my breasts and makes me look gaunt. The fact is that the fat is forever stuck on my hips and stomach.

I hear from a friend about Dr. Maffei. She tells me about this procedure called Smart Lipo. Seems interesting enough....I need more info and to do some research about this.....hmmmmmmmm.

11/15/09

Start researching Smart Lipo on the internet. Lots of doctors doing it. I can't seem to find any bad press on it. Been reading people's experiences, learning what to expect post op and have some questions.

12/15/09

Met with Dr. Maffei for a consult. I walked in with my long list of questions and fired away. He didn't seem to mind me asking a million questions. He came across as open and honest. He listened to my concerns and addressed each question. We talk about this not being a perfection procedure, but more to be used as a tool for "improvement". He states that I am a great candidate for this procedure. He asks me some questions about my general health and he gives me the contact information for someone who has had the procedure so I can ask them any questions too. We also take some "before"

photos and I tell him I am very interested and that want to think about it and discuss with my husband.

12/18/09

I've spoken to another one of Dr. Maffei's patients today. He seems very pleased with the results and he said that the re-coup so far (he was one week post op when I spoke to him) was okay and that he was just sore. I was able to see his before and after photos during my consult with Dr. Maffei and his results were remarkable! I am sold. Now just need to sell my husband.

12/19/09

Speak with hubby and he has reservations, he is worried that something will go wrong and that I will be out of commission after the procedure. He is concerned about me caring for our 2 small children. He is concerned that our insurance won't cover anything in case i have any issues afterward. We discuss over the next few days and I think I get my point across, I want to do this, please support my decision!!

12/20/09

My hubby isn't a fan of elective surgery but agrees to support me as I have worked so hard to get my body to where it is today. I am going for it, I am having Smart Lipo for my lower stomach and hip area

Pre-Op- 1 week before

Okay, totally nervous, just worried that the procedure will hurt and that something will happen to me. G-d forbid I die on the table and leave two kids behind all over the fact that I wanted a smoother stomach and less fleshy hips. Can't stop thinking about the procedure, how it will feel, what am I going to look like afterwards. Will my belly button end up on the other side of my body? Am I too vein, and I insane?

12/29/09 -Day of Smart Lipo

Morning of smart lipo procedure, take the Xanax and the Vicodin and the antibiotic before I leave the house. I feel more relaxed as we drive to the office. By the time I get there I am TOTALLY relaxed and a little in la la land....giggle. I get into the dressing gown and Dr. Maffei "marks up" my body in the areas he is going to be working on, much like I've seen on TV. It was all so surreal. We then proceed to the procedure room, while they are finishing prepping me they plug in my I Pod. What a gentlemen! At this point one of his nurses give me an eye guard to wear, as I indicated to her that I DID not want to watch (I can never watch these things on TV either). Once the eye guards were on and I was listening to my music, they sprayed me with Betadine solution and we were off and running.

I barely felt the small pricks as he numbed the area where he was going to be inserting the cannula and for the next few hours I just laid there as he did the Smart Lipo. I could not believe it. I did not feel a thing, and I was AWAKE!! It was so amazing, I only felt

pressure, like someone was pushing on my skin but no pain whatsoever!!!! It was crazy!!! After the procedure was finished I had to pee and when I stood up, I did leak out the insertion points. It seems a little odd, but because I was informed and had done my research, I knew what to expect. I was not freaked out at all. The nurses helped clean me up, and put on my compression garment and then we put the pads on to collect the drainage and some Depends (who would've thought I'd be wearing Depends, giggle) and I was good to go. I walked myself to the car and my husband drove me home. We actually stopped for lunch at the Diner on the way home, I couldn't believe how good I was feeling considering that I had just had the fat sucked out of me!!

I took 1 more Vicodin when I got home just to be sure that I wouldn't feel any pain that afternoon. the medicine made me a little tired and after a 15 min catnap I was up and around again. Dr. Maffei calls to see how I am feeling, nice touch!! I changed my dressings 2 more times before bed and they seemed quite full but still no real pain post procedure, just sore and a little tender in the insertion areas. I apply bacitracin to the insertion areas and go to bed at normal time. I slept like a baby except for my 2 yr old waking me up for a bad dream.....

12/30/09 Day 2

At 6am I took a Tylenol just in case...I couldn't believe that I wasn't having any pain overnight, I thought maybe it would come it he day after. It never did. I got up this morning, checked my dressings and they looked pretty dry. I think the draining is over...wow not even 24 hrs worth of draining!! I chuck the pads and Dr. Maffei calls to see how I am feeling. We discuss and he gives me good feedback on how the procedure went. We agree to meet on Tuesday for a re-check. I decide it's time to shower b/c the draining that happened all day yesterday is now absorbed into this compression garment. Yuck!! I throw my garment in the wash on cold, delicate cycle and race upstairs to shower. I manage to catch a glimpse of myself in the mirror, oohh a little Frankenstein looking as the marker hasn't totally worn off yet since yesterday, but OMG my hips are so much smaller....the stomach is still swollen and I can't really tell what is going on there, but the hips...whoa girl you look good!! By the time I get out of the shower and start drying my hair, the garment goes into the dryer no heat, and by the time I finish drying my hair the garment is dry. Holy cow this thing is magical!! I re-bacitracin my self and slip the garment back on...here we go!! Oh and BTW the garment has this little cutout area for you to pee and poop out of so you don't have to pull it down every time you need to go to the bathroom, it's convenient, but totally bizarre. Somehow I still feel like I need underwear (giggle) so I decide to put on my loosest pair and put it over the garment so I am not breezy, i look totally ridiculous like some sort of Jane Fonda '80's video but I laugh at myself and move on. I put on some sweats, as my regular clothes didn't seem to fit just yet. I assume I am still quite swollen despite the already immediate results I can see and decide not to weight myself at all this week!

Later that afternoon-I am feeling fine, working on some baking taking care of my kids...and I feel like I am actually up for a gym work out. I take a ride to the gym and

decide to stretch out as Dr. Maffei said, it's important to stretch the skin and keep moving. I take a good 10 mins to stretch and move around on the mat, then do 15 mins of vigorous walking on the treadmill, varying the incline. I try to run at a slow pace but feel like I am jostling my insides around a little too much. No running right now, next 15 mins on the elliptical at a slower speed than normal, but geez, i am sweating like a pig, this garment makes you sweat more. All i can think about is, wow, i am going to have to wash this thing often, smirk. Somehow this thing wicks away the wet though...I stop off at the supermarket on my way home and I feel dry again. Bizarre. I resolve that I am not washing it again tonight. Possibly tomorrow night...we'll see how gross I get. Reapply bacitracin and finish off the 2nd of the Celebrex for today.

12/31/09 Day 3

I could not fall asleep last night. I am sure this is just my nerves but I really was tired and just lay there until 1:30am. I couldn't stop thinking about the procedure and replaying the little details in my head, Even though I wasn't watching I kept imagining the skin the laser and the cannula, it was just grossing me out even to think of it. I couldn't believe that I actually went through with it. I don't know how these doctors don't vomit through this stuff. I am such a wus when it comes to that kind of stuff. I felt physically fine, just a little soreness in my abdomen, but my mind kept drifting to my shoulders, They were just sore from wearing the compression garment. I finally went and got my ipod and listened to a meditation cd to clear my mind and fell asleep.

Woke up this morning feeling in good spirits. Did my usual around the house, laundry feeding kids, playing with them....non stop. Managed to head back to the gym today. Spent 10 mins stretching, is it possible that I am more flexible today than yesterday?? I walked for about 5 mins on the treadmill and gently jogged for 10. Today it didn't hurt or feel weird to jog, it actually felt good to stretch my muscles. I then did the stair mill for 15 min, no problems there...came home and washed the compression garment during my shower and was ready to go. I did finally have some time to examine the treated area. The insertion areas are a little bruised but I can tell that they are on the mend. My hips are AMAZING, I can definitely see the difference. The jury is still out on the lower stomach, it's really swollen still and hard to tell what is going on there. I can see the pooched area is not as prominent but I have a feeling that this is all part of the healing. I am reserving judgement for the lower stomach after about 12 weeks. I can see some redness in the area of where I assume he did the laser on the top layer of fat closest to the skin. I also still look a little Frankenstein-esque with the marker lines still all over my body. I tried a little more today to get off the marker with some alcohol and a cotton ball. I haven't wanted to jostle the area as it was sore yesterday and the day before. Today apply a little more pressure and get off about another 10% of it. I am laughing thinking about it still being there next week after my one week check up. Dr. M use some washable marker would ya? Overall, feel good, just a little sore in my abs and lower stomach when I bend over to pick up something. I am sure I am somewhat numb in the stomach area where he treated but to be honest I don't even notice it. I guess 2 C-Sections will do that to you. I imagine a male having this procedure would probably feel

very different than a female. We are used to wearing control top panty hose or spanx body shapers..the compression garment is similar to that feeling. Anyone who has delivered a child would not even think that this is a difficult healing process. This is nothing compared to the C-Section healing process.

1/1/10 Day 4

It is a brand new year! Today I woke up, didn't even feel tightness in my abdomen at all. I was rockin it out until I walked into a chair this morning, ouch! Okay, still sensitive if you imple yourself on a chair.

Went to the gym again, tried a little jog, still not that comfortable with that movement. Decided to walk and stair mill it. Tried doing about 50 sit ups and it seemed like that was my limit. I am totally getting used to the compression garment now. I almost forget what it's like to not feel sucked in all the time. When I showered today I tried to get more of the marker off, did i mention that it's HARD to get it off!! I had some time to check myself out after the shower again. It's so neat, my body shape feels really different. My stomach looked less swollen today and I actually dare to try on a bikini. It fits and I think I am liking it. The marker is still totally distracting though. I slip on my washed garment (I put it on a little higher heat in the dryer and it shrank a little, but it feels better that it was shrunk). Andrew and I are going out for dinner tonight and I am forced to make a choice to put on some real clothes (i.e. nothing elastic which is what i've worn since the smart lipo). I go for the skinny jeans and miraculously they slide on over the compression garment and button totally fine. hello?? They were just washed and from the dryer not stretched out!! I am definitely less swollen today! Things are settling down. I am loving how i look in my jeans. I can't believe how high they sit on my hips now, it's like a dream that I don't have to hike them up over my hips and struggle with the muffin top. I am like a giddy teenager over dinner with my husband. He is happy that I am happy. Did I mention that I am happy??

Week 2 summation. Feeling great. Wearing my garment religiously. Definitely feeling like I need to wash it everyday just so I feel like I am clean and to shrink it back to being tight again. (It does stretch out after wearing it over the course of 1 day). I finally got all the marker off!

This week I am starting to feel those little twinges or what the doctor describes as a popping sensation or pulling of the skin. It's not all that often, but it sometimes happens when I would bend or turn a certain way, I would feel it in the crease of where I bent over. Nothing painful just a pinch sensation. I continue to stretch each day.

I saw Dr. Maffei for a follow up visit. He was happy at my progress. We took a few after photos again and he showed me the before and after pictures so far. It's amazing how much change you can see in a picture. He said chill out with the hard core cardio, the studies have shown that too much cardio can cause inflammation and swelling of the tissues....and we don't want that do we??? It turns out my daughter got sick, and had a really bad cold this week, so it was terrific timing. I couldn't make it to the gym the whole week.

I am used to wearing the garment now, it feels like old hat. Enjoying the fact that I can wear all my old clothes even with the garment on comfortably. I am starting to like the garment and enjoying how it makes me look a lot smoother than my regular skin.... this I realize is my next mental stumbling block...

Week 3 Summation - I am told that I can stop wearing the compression garment now. It's a little bit of a shock to take it off. Your stomach area feels a little less supported and at the gym you feel a little funny when you jog, but it is MUCH less than what I felt the first week. Also note that I am back up to running at full speed on the treadmill at the gym this week and I feel fine.

I can actually start to feel little tingly sensations below my skin this week. It's almost like the skin is starting to heal and I can feel like things are going on inside.

I am currently working through the mental block of looking at my body without the compression garment, the reality hits me, oh yeah the C-section scar...and oh the hips are a little more fleshy without the compression garment smoothing it out....you forget what the old you looked like and begin nit picking the new you a little. It's a mind game you play with yourself, because after all, are we ever really happy???

I try on the bikinis again and resolve to just shut my brain up. All my friends and family that know me and know that i had this done think I look great and can't believe how much flatter my stomach is already. I start googling Smart Lipo tonight and read a quote from one plastic surgeon who claims that the tightening of the skin doesn't even begin to occur until day 21 post procedure...I am going with that for now and dreaming about how I will look at my 6 week check up. Please understand, I am still 100% thrilled and happy I had the procedure done, but now I understand how people get addicted to plastic surgery....and want the touch ups. you fix one thing, then you want to change another!

Week 4 -Start of

Definitely gotten used to myself without the garment. I can look in the mirror and be happy with the progress and am loving my new shape. My focus has gone from the hips back to the lower stomach area. I just can't get over how much flatter my stomach is!!!! I can't tell you how much I used to obsess over this area of my body. I'd look at it from

every angle and hold the skin up..trying to imagine what it'd be like if it wasn't there anymore. Now it's just not there anymore!!!

The skin in the areas where he worked are definitely still numb, and when you wear your regular clothes, it just feels a little weird where the skin hits the fabric. Just getting used to that sensation. We shall see what this week brings.