

Patients find weight loss success at M.D.'s Weight and Wellness Center

By Ruth Fields
Courier Advertising Writer

For just about as long as she can remember, Vanessa Collier struggled with her weight. As her weight increased over the years, her self-confidence diminished. She was especially uncomfortable around her friends, because most of them were slender.

"They never said anything about it," she said, "but I started feeling more and more self-conscious. I got to the point where I didn't want to wear anything except sweaters because they would hide most of the fat."

Vanessa, a senior caregiver and a student at Sam Houston State University, tried to lose weight through a variety of diets and weight-loss programs. She never lost as much as she wanted to, however, and eventually gained back all the weight she had lost.

About a year ago, Vanessa's mother heard about Dr. Benton Baker III, founder of M.D.'s Weight and Wellness Center, from a friend who had successfully lost weight under Baker's care. She showed Vanessa an article in *The Courier* about Baker, and Vanessa read it with interest.

She had never been to a weight loss doctor before, so Vanessa was skeptical. She had heard people talk about weight loss doctors who talked down to patients and seemed to rush them out of their offices. Vanessa didn't like the idea of volunteering for such treatment. She told her mother that she would go in for one appointment, but if she sensed that Baker was indifferent, she wouldn't go back.

To her surprise, Vanessa found that Baker was genuinely interested in her weight loss success and spent lots of time with her.

"I realized that he was a really nice guy and had a good personality," she said. "He'll sit there and listen and talk to you as long as you want to talk. He's a fun person to be around. I could go to him every day."

Vanessa found it helpful that Baker discussed her activity

level and eating habits with her. She soon realized that she was eating too many calorie-rich foods and determined to make lifestyle changes so that she could spend the rest of her life at a normal weight.

An "aha" moment came when Vanessa learned that her favorite pasta entree at the local outlet of a national chain restaurant contains an astounding 1,300 calories.

"And that was just one meal out of that day," Vanessa said. "I never really thought about how unhealthy it was."

Armed with a detailed calorie guide and a food journal, Vanessa began revamping her dietary habits. Baker prescribed an FDA-approved, appetite suppressing drug to help Vanessa transition to healthier eating, but she found that she only needed to take half the usual dosage.

The month after she first saw Baker, Vanessa lost about 10 pounds. Such success inspired her to continue; every month she continued to lose five to 10 pounds. Baker was always excited about her weight loss, but Vanessa thinks that if she had only lost three pounds, he would have congratulated her for that small success and would have tweaked her weight-loss program to help her lose more.

Today, Vanessa weighs 77 pounds less than she did when she first saw Baker about a year ago and said she feels better than ever. She is within five pounds of her goal weight. Recently, while cleaning out her closet, Vanessa discovered that she is too small to wear jeans that she wore when she was in the seventh grade.

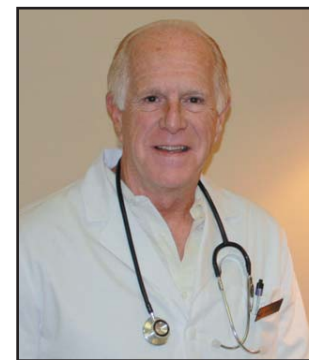
Several times, acquaintances have failed to recognize Vanessa.

"They will look at me like, 'Do I know you?'" she said. Others have pleased Vanessa by complimenting her new look. Several have asked the secret to her success.

"I have told a bunch of people, 'If it worked for me. . .

Here's his number.'"

After many years of practicing obstetrics and gynecology and serving as a professor of Ob/Gyn at several universities, Dr. Benton Baker III decided to devote



Dr. Benton Baker

the remainder of his career to helping his patients successfully lose weight.

About two years ago, Baker and his wife, Joy, a registered nurse, founded M.D.'s Weight and Wellness Center. The practice is dedicated to helping patients achieve better health through weight loss. Baker noted that two-thirds of Americans are at high risk of serious health problems

because they are overweight.

"Weight is responsible for all sorts of horrible medical conditions," he said. "It raises the risk of cardiovascular disease. It raises the risk of certain forms of cancer – in women, particularly, breast and uterine cancer. It raises the risk of a variety of forms of gastroenterological problems. . . It raises the risk of osteoarthritis and sleep apnea. And one of the real problems associated with it are psychological problems and depression."

Because his main goal is to improve his patients' health, Baker examines his patients and conducts lab work before suggesting weight-loss programs. In addition, he uses high-tech tools, such as a computerized bioimpedance analyzer that measures weight and body mass index. The machine determines percentages of body fat, fluid and lean body mass and calculates each patient's resting energy expenditure – the number of calories needed for vital body functions, such as breathing, blood circulation and digestion.

In addition, M.D.'s Weight and Wellness Center now offers metabolic testing. While the vast majority of people have normal metabolism, Baker said, some can benefit from metabolic testing. Once a patient's metabolic rate has been established, Baker can suggest ways to raise it by analyzing diet, the time of day that food is consumed and the patient's level of activity.

Baker develops individualized programs for patients and personally sees them at every visit. When they reach their target weights, he helps them create maintenance plans so that they won't regain the weight they lost.

"Our individualized and supportive care is just one of the many keys to the success our patients experience," he said.

M.D.'s Weight and Wellness Center
Benton Baker III, M.D., FACOG, FACS
200 River Pointe, Suite 115
936-756-THIN (8446)

Vanessa Collier has lost 77 pounds since she first saw Dr. Benton Baker III about a year ago.

