

# restraint, and self-respect

**G**astric bypass specialists might not always recommend skin removal, but for Amy, a young woman planning her wedding, it was an obvious choice, if she could afford to do it. "The life saving part of this, the gastric bypass surgery, really didn't help me with my self esteem. I was wearing this excess skin like it was a freak costume and I couldn't accept that. It just wasn't how I thought I would look. It made me sick to look at myself."

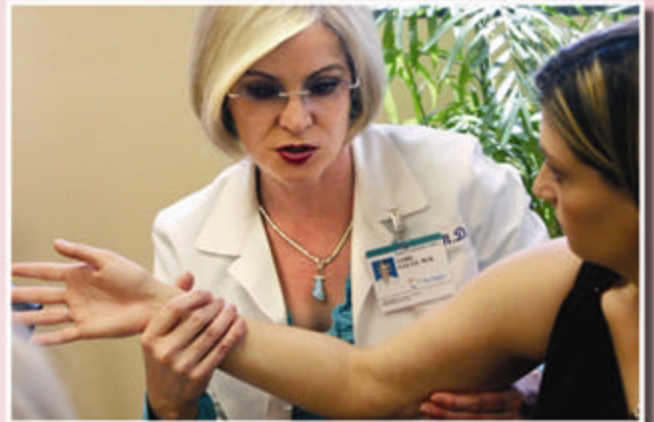
San Diego of course, is also well known for its world-class plastic surgeons. Again, Amy began to do research on the net and interviews in person. Once again, she chose a woman, Doctor Lori Saltz, of La Jolla Cosmetic Surgery Centre on the campus of Scripps Hospital, La Jolla. "I liked her. She was bold during consultation, lifting large chunks of my now loose flesh and hoisting it up to show me what I could look like. I was still so unhappy; here I'd lost all this weight and it was such a letdown to have to look like this."

Dr. Saltz is a body contouring specialist who understands how traumatic this type of skin reducing surgery can be. "If gastric bypass is mildly uncomfortable, trust me, this is real misery." Cutting away double digit pounds of flesh will leave you unable to move without great pain for several days, depending on how young and fit you are to begin with, and how dedicated you are to quick recovery." Complications like blood clots can kill you; fluid collection can be a nuisance that requires more surgical follow-up or more drainage. "The longer you're obese, the harder it is to have your skin return to a snug fit over your skeleton," she explains. Education, she says, is critical; candidates must be realistic and understand that when they have their stomachs reduced, they will probably also need extensive and expensive cosmetic surgery. Thirty thousand dollars for waist, abdomen, upper arm and upper thigh contouring is not unusual. "It's usually done in three or four stages because it's too much trauma for the body all at once."

Amy is not embarrassed about the new scars that look like giant zippers from her elbows to the cleavage between her breasts. She claims the new

red flesh demarcations circling her midsection are already diminishing nicely. "Again, her youth and her attitude make all the difference in her healing, says Dr. Saltz. She smiles with pride when she looks at Amy, prepping her for the next phase, thigh skin reduction. "Amy could be a poster child for this long, difficult process of gastric bypass and body recontouring. She has exactly what makes her the ideal candidate: the right attitude."

All of this isn't easy, of course. Amy knows the rest of her life will be an exercise in restraint and self respect. The new wardrobe, the new hairdo, the media darling 'tude are merely superficial crutches for the evolving soul Amy must embrace. Now when she peers into the looking glass, Amy doesn't need Alice anymore. She has found her own space in the land of plenty.



## SOURCES FOR THOSE CONSIDERING WEIGHT-LOSS SURGERY

[www.obesityhelp.com](http://www.obesityhelp.com)

Chat room, clothing exchange and other resources.

[www.asbs.org](http://www.asbs.org)

Links surgeons and other information from the American Society for Bariatric Surgery.

[www.wisguide.com](http://www.wisguide.com)

Medical illustrations and tips from Doctor's Guide to weight loss surgery.

[www.obesitysurgery.com](http://www.obesitysurgery.com)

Online search and purchase of articles from bariatric medical journal.