



Success Stories

Healthy Living Matters. Prevention Works.

Working Hard, Looking Good

VETERAN MICHAEL FAVREAU DISCUSSES HOW MOVE!® AND BARIATRIC SURGERY HELPED HIM GET HIS DIABETES AND HEALTH UNDER CONTROL

When Michael Favreau found out he had diabetes, he knew he had to address his rising blood sugar and long-standing weight problem. His second try at MOVE! was the charm, and he began a challenging journey to a healthier weight. Now, after successful bariatric surgery and an 87-pound weight loss, Michael is determined to continue his progress towards a better, longer life.



"I really started to lose weight after finding out I had diabetes in 2005. The first time I tried MOVE!, I just wasn't ready to make the needed lifestyle changes. But I'm lucky to have a great VA primary care provider who pushed me to try MOVE! again. At the time, my weight was making my blood sugar rise, and my health care team was having a hard time trying to get it under control.

During my second time in MOVE!, I started to exercise more and eat healthier. But even though I was also meeting with a dietitian, I would lose 10 - 15 pounds and gain it right back...and then some! My TeleHealth Care Coordinator was the first to tell me about weight-loss surgery, which I researched and decided was my best option.

I was put in touch with the MOVE! Coordinator at the Battle Creek (MI) VAMC. She helped me with all of the things I had to do for the surgery. If I had a problem, she was right there to take care of it—I couldn't have done it without her!

I had to lose at least 15 pounds before the surgery, so I was on a liquid diet for 2 weeks before and after. VA helped me with that and I am very grateful. I had my gastric-sleeve surgery in late June 2014. I went home the following day and did not have any ill effects.

Since my surgery, I continue to work down to my goal weight. At the start of my journey, I weighed 329 pounds. I was taking medication for high blood pressure, my insulin dose was very high, and my blood sugar was out of control.

Today, I weigh 242 pounds. My blood pressure is normal, so I don't need medicine for that. I've greatly reduced the insulin I take, and my blood sugar rarely goes up. Now, if my sugar is up, I usually bring it back down by going for a walk. I might gain a pound or two, but I keep on track towards my goal weight of 200 pounds.

At an appointment in December 2015, my doctor commented on how good I looked and how proud she was of me. She'd never seen me at 242 pounds in the 10 years I was her patient. I used to wear a size 44 pants and a XXL shirt; today, I wear a 34 and a Large. I haven't been at this weight since the early 1980's!

Even if I don't feel like it, I go to the gym 5 days a week because I am determined to reach and stay at my goal weight. I do a little strength training and a little cardio. I ride a bike and walk on a treadmill—without getting short of breath. On top of that, I walk 3 - 4 miles a day outside.

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— Michael Favreau

I've taken classes on healthy eating and preparing healthy meals. Now, I make all of my meals from scratch and avoid processed foods. I eat little meat now, and it's mostly chicken or fish.

I aim to reach my goal in June 2016, but if not, I will keep working on it. I hope my story helps others take the steps to lose weight and get healthy. MOVE! and surgery works! I am going to continue to keep working and stay healthy to live longer!”

