

the ripple effect

AN EYE-OPENING NOTE ON HER MEDICAL CHART CONVINCED THIS MEMBER TO START MAKING CHOICES THAT TRANSFORMED HER HEALTH, HER BODY, AND HER FAMILY FOR A HEALTHIER FUTURE.

AS TOLD TO MANDY RICH

JENNIFER MORIN

AGE 39 HEIGHT 5'11"

LOST 78 LB*



I didn't have an issue with my weight when I was growing up, but I was always the biggest girl among my friends. After my wedding, I got swept away by typical "newlywed bliss." My husband and I would go out to eat—a lot. Everything was a celebration. During my second pregnancy, I went to a routine doctor's appointment. When I glanced at my chart and saw "obese pregnancy" at the top, I was shocked—was that how other people saw me? Was I actually obese?

In the back of my mind, I was wondering if my weight had something to do with my Crohn's disease. I was diagnosed 13 years ago, after my first pregnancy. Crohn's is a digestive disorder that's very difficult to live with. The disease is different for everyone, but many people have trigger foods that give them horrible stomach pains. From the time of my diagnosis, I knew that dairy products set off my symptoms,

Turn the page for more →

GET
MORE

Visit weightwatchers.com/jennifer to hear Jennifer talk about her success.

"HAVING A CHRONIC DISEASE IS A CHALLENGE, BUT I'M MUCH STRONGER NOW, AND I'M BETTER ABLE TO DEAL WITH THE TOUGH TIMES WHEN THEY ARISE."

PHOTOGRAPHY: JOHN KERNICK; HAIR AND MAKEUP: TRISTA JORDAN/DINAIR AIRBRUSH; WARDROBE STYLING: LAUREN SCHUGAR; LOCATION: PCC NATURAL MARKETS.

healthiest ever

CHANGING FOR GOOD

but I wondered whether any of my other poor eating habits made the pain worse. I knew that a better diet goes hand in hand with better overall health. Maybe if I made some changes, they'd not only help with my weight, but also help me manage my symptoms better, I thought.

Getting with the Program

That note on my records stuck in my mind. After I gave birth to my daughter, I went straight to Weight Watchers. When I got home from my first meeting, I started thinking about my usual routine. Before, when I was looking for a snack, I'd go right for a bag of chips, and then I'd go out to lunch with the girls and order

I TRUSTED MYSELF, BECAME MY BEST FRIEND, AND LOVED MYSELF THROUGH THE PROCESS—AND EVEN MORE SO NOW.

fettuccine Alfredo and a glass of wine, and after all that, I'd go to a spaghetti dinner with my husband. That didn't work for my 5'1" frame. I decided to start cooking more at home and choosing fruit or veggies over salty snacks.

Fine-tuning my food

After losing almost 60 pounds, I thought the symptoms of my Crohn's disease would diminish. But I was still feeling bloated and uncomfortable, so I talked to my doctor. He told me that I had become intolerant to gluten as well as dairy. Instead of focusing on foods that wouldn't help me stay healthy, I looked on the bright side. I would "crowd them out" with vegetables, like delicious squashes I'd pick up from the farmers' market each week. Adding new foods kept me motivated and made me forget about all the extra bread and pasta that I used to eat!



↑ "ME TIME" ON THE MOUNTAIN

I've learned that exercise doesn't have to take place in a gym—and it can help to renew you. I'm a hiking convert, and now I'll even go on hikes on my own. A few months ago, I was feeling like I needed time for myself. While my husband watched the kids, I hiked to the top of Mount Si, on a trail near our home. It took me all day, and it was an amazing way to de-stress.



"Realizing how others viewed me was a big wake-up call. Seeing this picture was another one."

MAKE IT SPECIAL

I learned how to limit the number of times I go out to eat. Now, I save dining out for a big occasion or a date night with my husband.



Turn the page for more →

healthiest ever
CHANGING FOR GOOD



↑ RECLAIMING THE KITCHEN

I love to try new healthy recipes with my family. I'll make smoothies with the kids, or whip up new vegetable dishes like spaghetti squash. With my condition, I prefer making the bulk of my meals from scratch. It gives me full control over what goes into my body. Talk about empowering! And I love teaching my kids these lessons, too.



Discovering the great outdoors

I had never seriously exercised before—it felt like dirty work to me. But my husband loves the outdoors, and he had always wanted me to hike with him. In fact, he proposed to me at the end point of the Appalachian Trail in Maine! I never really enjoyed hiking, but as I started losing weight, I began to appreciate it more, especially now that we live in the Pacific Northwest. We'll go hiking as a family on trails nearby, or we'll take trips to Yellowstone National Park. I really thank my husband for giving me this gift—this love for nature and the outdoors.

All in the family

The biggest highlight of my success is the impact it has had on my family—it trickled down in a big way. My mother and my mother-in-law have found success on the Program. My husband has gotten healthier,

and he's been my biggest support. He gave me the willpower and confidence to push for something I wanted so much: to live a healthier life and to feel better. Knowing you always have someone in your corner is the best feeling in the world.

Paying it forward

When I reached my goal, I wanted to empower others who also deal with autoimmune digestive disorders. After going through my own life transformation, I started thinking of becoming a health coach; I felt I would be able to relate to my clients. I went to the Institute for Integrative Nutrition in New York and became a board-certified health coach. I do one-on-one counseling with people who have autoimmune digestive disorders. I'm so grateful that I'm able to give back and help others achieve their health and wellness dreams. I had one client who had extremely high blood pressure. I worked with her to develop a nutrition plan and create a supermarket strategy, and she was able to lower it drastically. She told me her cardiologist was thrilled. It's such a privilege to know I'm helping other people change their lives.