

# THE COSTCO CONNECTION

A lifestyle magazine for Costco members

SPECIAL SECTION:  
**FOR YOUR  
HEALTH**

Health info on the Web  
Ask the pharmacist  
Pilates and human kinetics  
Feel-full strategies **39**

Health expert  
Jorge Cruise  
with Costco  
members

## Beating the bulge

Costco members  
shape up for 2010

PAGE 34

January 2010 • Vol. 25 • No. 1

PPSRT STD  
U.S. Postage  
Paid  
Merced, CA  
Permit #1275

# Fighting fat

These folks are winning the battle. Can you?



**Success stories:**  
Left to right, Jorge Cruise with Costco members Tina Bickel, John Swanstrom, Dawn Culbertson, Ron White, Michelle McGowen, Alexandra Edmondson and Kimberly Barry.



IT'S THE NEW YEAR, a time for new goals and resolutions. Is one of yours to create a new, thinner you?

If so, you're not alone. A comprehensive national health and nutrition survey found that about 65 percent of Americans weigh too much. They're either simply overweight—roughly 10 to 30 pounds too heavy—or obese. And the number of obese adults has doubled since 1980.

Why should you care? Because being overweight brings an increased risk of heart disease, diabetes, many types of cancer and other illnesses. Studies indicate that America spends more than \$100 billion on healthcare needs related to obesity every year, with prescription drugs for controlling diabetes making up much of that cost.

And there's the personal side: a shorter average life span and, for many people, the feeling they are not living the life they want.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's Web site offers this blunt assessment: "American society has become 'obesogenic,' characterized by environments that promote increased food intake, nonhealthful foods, and physical inactivity."

In terms of food intake, we are eating more than we have historically, and we're eating different foods than did

our ancestors, who were comparatively free from common modern diseases. One culprit may be sugar, many researchers believe. According to a study at Colorado State University, our daily sugar intake is 189 grams—about 47 teaspoons—hidden or not so hidden in cereals, sodas, cookies and other foods. Before the Industrial Revolution, daily sugar consumption was less than 15 grams.

After reading an article in last January's *Costco Connection* about health expert Jorge Cruise and his Belly Fat Cure, Costco members responded. Some 160,000 people downloaded a free Belly Fat Cure report from Cruise's Web site. And a group of 100 members were chosen to take the "Belly Fat Cure Challenge"—an eating plan that restricts sugar intake to 15 grams a day while allowing six servings of carbohydrates (about 120 grams). That balance, Cruise says, keeps the body's insulin levels low, which leads to a thinner waist.

Seven of those people are profiled here. All together, these Costco members, each from San Diego, lost 152 pounds. We are presenting their stories to show that ordinary people can lose weight with relatively easy steps—starting with simply being more aware of ingredients. Read the profiles for inspiration, do some research and in 2010 find an eating plan that will help you become the new you.—*Tim Talevich*

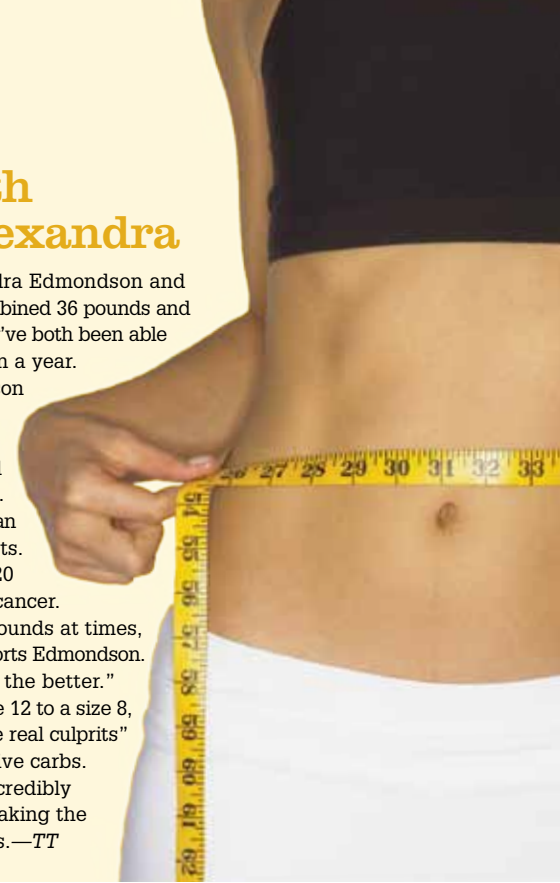
## Catching up with Michelle and Alexandra

THE LAST WE HEARD from Alexandra Edmondson and Michelle McGowen, they had lost a combined 36 pounds and nearly 14 inches from their waists. They've both been able to keep that weight off after more than a year.

*The Connection* featured Edmondson and McGowen last year (October and June issues, respectively) in a series of stories about frustrated dieters who had found success with the Belly Fat Cure. Edmondson had turned to the eating plan after several dead ends with other diets. McGowen needed help after gaining 20 extra pounds following treatment for cancer.

"My weight fluctuates by 1 or 2 pounds at times, but I have been able to keep it off," reports Edmondson. "I have made permanent changes for the better."

McGowen, who dropped from a size 12 to a size 8, says the key has been to eliminate "the real culprits" in her diet: hidden sugars and excessive carbs. "With my new way of eating, I feel incredibly healthy and I am confident that I am taking the best possible care of myself," she says.—*TT*



MEDIA BAKERY

## A new life

Name: **Tina Bickel**

Age: **40**

Height: **5'2"**

Pounds lost: **15**

Belly inches lost: **7**

WHENEVER A PROGRAM like the Belly Fat Cure comes along, people generally think "weight loss." In this case, that's not what attracted Tina Bickel.

"It's not only about losing weight," Bickel says. "It's about feeling better. It's how I felt inside. Jorge's ad didn't say anything about losing weight. His ad specifically said, 'Stop feeling tired and unhealthy,' and that's what attracted me to sign up."

Bickel had been through a particularly nasty divorce and was dealing with back pain and arthritis, exacerbated by a slightly increased weight.

"People said, 'You didn't look like you had to lose anything,'" she recalls of people who saw her "before" picture. Rather than needing to lose weight, she needed to lose the weariness and a general sense of feeling less than well.

"I've tried Weight Watchers and Nutri-system, South Beach, the Cabbage Soup Diet; none of them worked," Bickel observes, before quickly adding, "although I realize they work for some people."

The Belly Fat Cure meant learning a new way of eating.

"I had always monitored calories, since most of the other programs were all about calories," Bickel says. "I had never monitored sugar before."

She started eating foods with less sugar and the "right carbs," and, according to her, "the weight just started falling off."

Bickel says she lost 15 pounds and 7 inches around her belly, but, more important, "I feel like I'm 20 years younger. I have more energy than I've ever had."

That energy is benefiting others. "Those of us who were really into [the Belly Fat Challenge] volunteered to act as mentors. It's hard for people to get started, so I show them how to read food labels, show them what their options are and try to guide them. That first week can be really difficult ... but once you get the hang of it, you can't go back to your old ways because it makes you physically sick. Your body tells you it's not worth it."—*Steve Fisher*

## The couple that eats together ...

Name: **Dawn Culbertson**

Age: **37**

Height: **5'7"**

Pounds lost: **30**

Belly inches lost: **6**

BEING IN A RELATIONSHIP has many benefits. You've got someone with whom to share joys, sorrows and, for couple Dawn Culbertson and Ron White, weight loss.

"It really helps to have someone to do it with," says White.

In fact, when Culbertson decided to change the way she eats, White thought he was there for support only. But as he made changes along with his partner, they both began to drop pounds.

The two, who've been dating for three years, had different reasons for wanting to lose weight. Culbertson says she's struggled with her weight all of her life. She'd recently lost several pounds and was looking for a way to keep that weight off, if not lose a little more.

White, on the other hand, was trying to get back the slender build he'd had in his youth. "You think you're still athletic-looking. Then you see a photo of yourself and think, 'Oh my goodness!'" he says.

Culbertson says tag-teaming weight loss was particularly nice in the beginning, when the couple faced the challenge of tracking everything they were eating. Even when they'd mastered making healthy food choices, it was helpful to turn to each other for support.

Name: **Ron White**

Age: **40**

Height: **5'11"**

Pounds lost: **20**

Belly inches lost: **3**

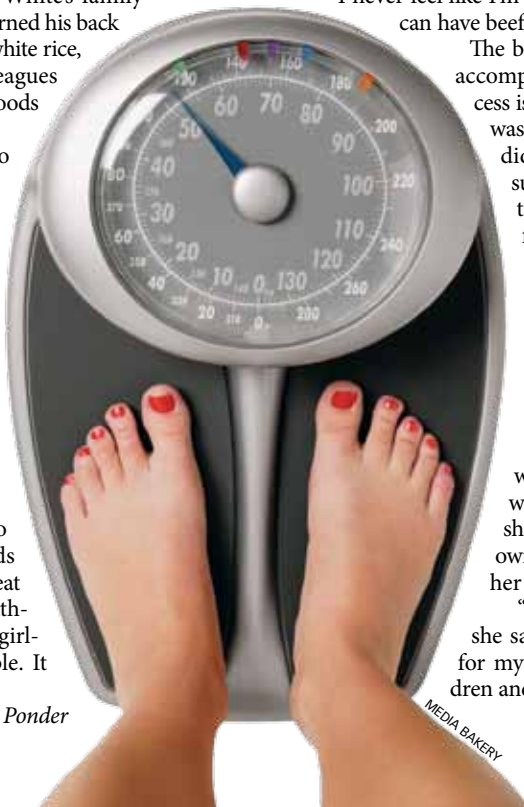
Examples include when White's family couldn't understand why he turned his back on his lifelong food staple of white rice, and when Culbertson's colleagues continued to offer her baked goods and other sweets.

Together they've learned to pay attention to labels, avoid processed food and even provide the voice of reason by asking, "Are you sure you want to eat that?" Another benefit, White tells *The Connection*, is that being a couple makes it easier to stay on track at restaurants.

He says, "We do like to dine out. Since we've started to eat smaller portions, we share an entrée and we're both full."

You don't want to try to lose weight by yourself, adds White. "If you do, you can cheat here and there. [Making healthful food choices] with your girlfriend makes you accountable. It will help you stick with it."

—*Stephanie E. Ponder*



MEDIA BAKERY

## In memory of Mom

Name: **Kimberly Barry**

Age: **52**

Height: **5'7"**

Pounds lost: **15**

Belly inches lost: **6**

"MY MOTHER WAS 5 feet tall and weighed 250 pounds," says Kimberly Barry. "She spent the last five years of her life in bed because of the pain she had in her knees—they were unable to hold her weight. I didn't ever want to be in that situation."

With that motivation guiding her, Barry, whose mother passed away two years ago from weight-related diabetes and other health complications, saw the invitation from Jorge Cruise last January in *The Connection* as the opportunity to lose the weight that had plagued her for many years.

"After having four children, I never got back to my pre-pregnancy weight of 125," Barry says. "I was sick of having a fat belly and not looking nice in my clothes. My energy level was low, and I was tired all the time."

"I had done many diets before—Atkins, South Beach—but I always went back to eating the way I had before," she continues, adding that she has about four or five more pounds to go. "With this approach, I never feel like I'm denying myself. I mean, I can have beef tacos!"

The biggest realization that has accompanied her yearlong success is just how much sugar she was previously consuming. "I did not realize how much sugar is in just about everything," says Barry, whose family has gone from skeptical to admiring as they witnessed her shedding her weight and regaining her energy. "Now I cook healthier, better foods for my family, and they enjoy everything I cook."

Although her mother's weight and health struggles were what motivated her, she says thinking about her own family was what pushed her on.

"It was time to get healthy," she says. "I want to be around for my children and grandchildren and great-grandchildren."

—*T. Foster Jones*

## Losing his baby fat

Name: **John Swanstrom**

Age: **46**

Height: **5'11"**

Pounds lost: **36**

Belly inches lost: **10**

A FEW YEARS AGO, John Swanstrom, a flight attendant for American Airlines, was beginning to accept the idea that he was going to carry 40 extra pounds, maybe more, around his midsection for good. He had already tried the Atkins diet. He lost weight but was unable to keep it off. But then, after 19 years of marriage, he and his wife had a "special surprise" in the form of a baby boy. Suddenly Swanstrom wanted to lose his extra weight.

"I was 45 when I found out that my son, Jake, was on the way. I did the math and realized I was going to be 60 when he graduates from high school. I didn't want to be the big fat dad. I wanted to be able to coach sports and get out and do stuff with him. I now have a 15-year-old daughter and a 2-year-old son. I have to stay young and healthy for them," says Swanstrom.

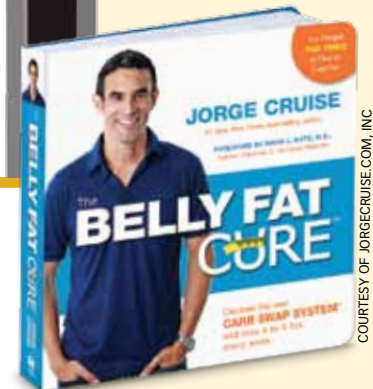
At the time, Swanstrom weighed 220 pounds. In the previous seven years he had lost both of his parents to health issues. He says that because of them, he "saw the writing on the wall" concerning his own health.

Today, after losing 36 pounds and keeping it off for more than a year, mostly by learning how to "budget" his eating, he is much more active and says his self-esteem has improved.

"I have a beautiful family. My wife and kids look really great, but when I would see pictures of us together, I just didn't feel like I was keeping my end of the bargain," Swanstrom says. Now, he says, they all look great together.—*Will Fifield*

## The Costco Connection

Jorge Cruise's new book, *The Belly Fat Cure*, is available at most Costco warehouses. The author will sign books in select locations during January. For a schedule and to download his new, free carb-swap report and video, visit [www.TheBellyFatCure.com](http://www.TheBellyFatCure.com).



COURTESY OF JORGE CRUISE, INC.



MEDIA BAKERY

## Their tips

Make dinners for at least five nights on Sunday.

—*Tina Bickel*

Do not deprive yourself if you're hungry—grab a handful of nuts. They're filling and easy to haul around with you.

—*Dawn Culbertson*

Enjoy a hearty breakfast that gives you energy straight through the morning. Realize that every day is a chance to improve.

—*Ron White*

I take my stevia or xylitol with me in my purse wherever I go.

—*Kimberly Barry*

Purchase a small cooler or lunch box and make sure you have ½-cup plastic containers and sealable plastic bags available to pack meals.

—*John Swanstrom*