



*While purchasing diet foods from Monarch Medical Weight Loss Center, Fred Brand chats with another man as his wife Sharon listens in. Brand, of Canyonville, has lost over 33 pounds since becoming a client.*  
Andy Bronson / N-R staff photo

## Taking aim at obesity

By Marissa Harshman  
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Three months ago when Fred Brand would go out to Sunday brunch, he wouldn't hold back. He would order a large seafood omelet accompanied by hash browns, a butter-soaked English muffin and a glass of champagne.

Since then, Brand has learned to substitute his greasy, calorie-loaded favorites with low-calorie, high-protein alternatives. And he's seeing the benefits.

The Canyonville resident, who is now 33 pounds lighter, has lower blood pressure, a waist smaller by 6 1/4 inches, a neck one inch slimmer and a back free from nagging pain, is feeling healthy and energetic. Brand walks around with a smile plastered across his face and is proud of his success.

His weight loss campaign started when Brand, 65, was visiting his doctor about a persistent knee pain. He was also having a hard time standing up after sitting.

"My doctor said, 'You know what it is, don't you?' And I said 'Well yeah, it's this,'" Brand said, shaking his now-slimmer belly.

Brand's doctor suggested he try a new medical weight loss clinic in town. His doctor didn't know much about the Monarch Medical Weight Loss Center that opened in Roseburg in May, but he had heard about it, and knew it was helping people lose weight, Brand said. A few days after his doctor's appointment, Brand received a call from the Monarch Center and decided he would give the clinic a shot.

"I asked if it was something I had to do," Brand said. "They told me I didn't have to do it, but that my doctor thought I should try it. So I said I would come in and see what they had to offer."

The Roseburg center was the second Monarch clinic opened in the state. Dr. Rick Lindquist and six other Oregon physicians decided to start the Monarch centers after hearing

about a similar program a friend was using in California. They opened their first center in Eugene in March 2006 and now have six clinics in the west side of Oregon. They plan to open four additional centers by the end of the year, with the goal of tackling obesity among Oregonians.

The clinic does not have a program for people younger than 18, but Lindquist hopes a program aimed at youth can be developed in the future.

Obesity is a problem not only in America, but also worldwide, Lindquist said. A person with a body mass index (BMI) of 30 or higher is considered obese. A BMI of 25 to 29.9 is considered overweight. The BMI measures an adult's weight in relation to height. Since 1989 the obesity rate in Oregon, and the rest of the states, has been steadily climbing. Last year not a single state had less than a 15 percent obesity rate, according to data from the Center for Disease Control and Prevention, and Oregon was no exception.

In 2006, 35.9 percent of Oregonians were overweight and 24.8 percent were obese, according to the data. The percentage of overweight Oregonians has declined slightly in the last six years, but the number of obese is at its highest.

"I don't think the problem dealing with overweight and obesity will be solved with one clinic opening," Lindquist said. "We have to find a way to reach more, but we're being careful to manage our growth. We have our own accountability and we don't want to get flaky."

Lindquist left his job in the emergency room at McKenzie-Willamette Medical Center in Springfield to start the medical weight loss clinic, but he said the transition wasn't too drastic.

"In the emergency room we deal with people who have injuries that are related to weight. The heart attacks, the strokes, the orthopedic injuries, pain in the knees and back, the high blood pressure, diabetes, all of those things," said Lindquist, who is now based in Eugene. "It was very appealing to try and deal with those things on the other end."

Brand's high blood pressure and pain in his knee and back prompted him to address his health issues before he ended up in an emergency room. At Brand's first visit to the Monarch Center he met with a clinical nurse specialist who analyzed Brand's caloric intake, weight, BMI and body fat percentage. From the data, Brand and the nurse set weight-loss goals and formed his daily meal schedule.

Before starting the program, Brand would usually eat only breakfast and dinner, but would eat large portions at both meals. Now Brand eats seven meals each day, one meal every two and a half hours. He eats six mini-meals and one regular meal, which is usually dinner. Brand eats 150-200 calories and 15 grams of protein at each mini-meal. His dinner consists of 350-450 calories and 35 grams of protein, he said.

The high-protein diet ensures that Brand doesn't lose muscle mass, but that he drops unwanted fat, he said. Brand also walks five miles each day with his wife, even though the program doesn't emphasize exercise as a method of weight loss.

Patients of the clinic also have the option of taking appetite-suppressant pills to help adjust to the lower calorie meals, said Dr. Jim Daskalos, who works at the Roseburg clinic.

Usually patients will take the suppressants for a couple of weeks and then stop using them, he said. The calorie restriction and suppressants lead to patient success, but Daskalos thinks accountability is the main factor.

“The key, to me, is the accountability,” Daskalos said. “They have to pay money and come in each week. They are accountable to us.”

Brand purchased most of his meals from the clinic for the first couple weeks he was on the program, and now is incorporating more store-bought food into his diet.

“They’re training you to go out to the grocery store and buy food and stay on the program,” said Sharon Brand, Fred’s wife of 46 years. “It’s about finding substitutes for the things you always had to have, but you still enjoy them.”

This is Brand’s first diet and he still has 37 more pounds to lose to reach his goal weight of 180 pounds. But he’s determined to stick to the Monarch program until he reaches it.

Even some of the nurses and doctors have tried the program and found success. Lindquist said he’s lost 35 pounds since starting the program and some employees have lost more than 100 pounds, due to their hard work and motivation.

“It’s like anything, you get out of it what you put into it,” Lindquist said. “I’m very determined to keep it off. If I’m going to be a representative of my weight loss clinic, I better walk the walk.”

### **So you know...**

The Monarch Medical Weight Loss Center has treated about 300 patients since its opening five months ago. Patients pay \$99 per month for the program.

The fee includes a monthly exam, where weight, height, body fat percentage and body mass index are measured, and weekly check-ups where height and weight are measured.

The monthly fee also includes one B-12 vitamin shot and 12 weekly information guides to healthy eating.

The Monarch Center offers pre-packaged food for patients to purchase. The food teaches patients about portions and about healthy meal choices.

Information: 673-2774