



\$5,000 WINNER

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## Microstep

Eating more slowly and savoring my meals



## Outcome

"I've lost 20 pounds and I have more energy."

In January this year, my doctor gave me a warning. He told me I needed to start eating healthily and exercising or I probably wouldn't grow old. I had diabetes, high cholesterol, and obesity. I'm on a diabetic medication that helps with weight loss, but I was still overeating. It was difficult to do much without getting out of breath; and after work I'd just sit on the couch and sleep. I'm 49 and I want to be here for my family, so I started the Thrive Challenge.

### Learning about nutrition was my first step.

I began looking at food labels and being careful to avoid high sugar snacks. I used to drink a lot of diet sodas, but they would make me crave sweets, and I gradually cut them out completely. I just drink water and green tea now, and my cravings have stopped. As a manager in a busy store, I'd grab fast food in a rush. Now I'm food prepping and I bring in healthy meals to work. A Microstep that helped was eating more slowly and savoring my meals. Since childhood I always thought I needed to clean my plate, and now I know I can stop eating when I'm full.

### My family is supporting me and we're all eating in a new way.

My husband, Eric, does most of the cooking, but I help and so do our teenagers, Micah and Rylee. We're using our air fryer and cooking outside with the grill or the smoker. For dinner we'll have chicken or fish with grilled zucchini, squash, or broccoli, and I love making shrimp tacos with low carb tortillas. For snacks I have jerky, high protein yogurt, and pickles.

### Making time to move has made a big difference to my mood.

Micah and I started going to the gym together. I use all the cardio machines and Micah is encouraging me to lift weights. After a few weeks I noticed I was enjoying working out and feeling stronger. I also walk with my co-workers during our breaks.

### Once I started losing weight, I had the energy for my hobby: gardening.

As a family, we're spending hours outdoors, digging, weeding, and planting. Gardening is a stress-reliever for me and a great way to wind down after work. We have a beautiful flower bed at the front of our house with sunflowers, roses, and calla lilies. We set up three raised beds in the backyard where we're growing bell peppers, squash, sweet potatoes, and other veggies. We also have honeydew melon and strawberries. Eating food we've grown is wonderful — it tastes so good.

### I have more motivation to help others.

I'm volunteering with the local domestic violence center, and for Baton Rouge Pride. I've been participating in charity walks, and I head up community involvement for our Academy. Giving back brings me a lot of joy.

### A big surprise is how much better I can focus now that I'm healthier.

I'm pursuing a degree in Information Technology through Walmart's Live Better U program, and I can pay attention to my school work and complete my assignments now without falling asleep. I feel accomplished.

### My doctor is delighted with my progress.

I've lost 20 pounds, I'm in less pain, and my blood work is almost back to normal. I'm looking forward to my 50s. I see myself living a long life and hopefully becoming a grandma one day.