

FOR six years Ana Pita was a prisoner in her own home and confined to a wheelchair because her weight had rocketed to a colossal 30 stone.

She was also on a cocktail of pills every day to help with a number of health-related problems including diabetes, high blood pressure, asthma and back problems.

But after a life-saving gastric bypass last year, the 36-year-old Bournemouth mother has lost more than half her body weight and no longer has to take any medication.

Now the local mum looks set to become a local celebrity as her story is to be featured in a new television series which starts next week on the Discovery channel.

Ana first came to the UK from the Portuguese island of Madeira with her family 10 years ago because she found it difficult to cope with the heat because of her size.

Today she lives in Boscombe with her husband Carlos, who is also her translator, as Ana is unable to speak much English.

Carlos says his wife is much happier now she has lost the weight.

"It is a big operation and everyone was scared but she felt it was worth it for a better quality of life," he

By Nicky Findley

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explains. "Before she couldn't go anywhere. Whereas it would take me five minutes to walk to the shops it would take her an hour or hour and a half."

He says Ana started to pile on the weight after the birth of their son - who is now aged 15.

But he says it was all the medication that exacerbated the problem.

Now she is no longer dependent on a wheelchair and can look after and cook for her family which she was unable to do before.

Speaking via her husband, Ana said she would recommend the surgery to other people in a similar situation.

"I had tried to diet and lose the weight but I would always put it back on again.

"My only regret is that I didn't have the surgery sooner."

Ana now weighs 12 stone, 5lb and has dropped from a dress size 34 to an 18.

She had her gastric bypass surgery in January last year at Streamline Surgical. The operation involves surgical staples creating a pouch in the upper part of the stomach and a section of intestine being removed. It means the patient can only eat small meals and food is absorbed less easily into the body.

Tam Fry, who is a member of the National Obesity Forum, stressed that a gastric bypass is a major operation that should only be considered as a last resort.

"There has been an increase in the number of people having this sort of procedure but it is a huge decision and

not one to be taken lightly.

"Anyone considering the procedure should be made aware of all the possible complications and side-effects because you are literally bypassing the stomach and all the digestive processes that go with that."

He added that although the operations are cheaper than all the drugs and treatments an obese person will need throughout their life - a gastric bypass or band are expensive procedures.

"Bariatric surgery can be a cost-effective measure in the long-term because any related health problems tend to clear up quite quickly afterwards but in the short-term it is an expensive procedure costing in the region of between £6,000 and £10,000."

TV presenter Fern Britton admitted last year that she had a gastric band operation to lose five stone - a slightly different procedure in which the stomach is made smaller by use of a band.

● **Fat Doctor premieres on Discovery Home & Health, Tuesdays at 9pm from October 13.**



JOY: Ana, above, weighs 12st 5lb today and is down to a size 18 from the 30st size 34 she has been in the past (below and left)



Staple diet

Weight-loss operation saved my life says mum Ana, who is down from 30 stone to just 12...