

I'm half the woman I was!



The doctor gave me just five years to live...

By Teresa Syrett, 49, from Isle of Wight

Putting on a few pounds when you're pregnant is normal, right? Most women bang on a bit of extra baggage.

And me? I was no different. But having four kids in as many years had left me with as much flab that I just couldn't fix. I'd been a size-14 before the kids. Suddenly, I was a size-22!

But I could cope with that. My kids were my world. So what if I wasn't a supermodel size?

But then, after 10 years of marriage, my husband and I split up.

Suddenly, I was a single mum at just 28 years old.

Not surprising then that a black cloud of depression hung over my head.

And the way I dealt with it?

I ate. Of course, with four kids, there were plenty of leftovers to polish off.

It wasn't chocolate that got me, it was savoury food. Jumbo packets of crisps...

Food became my comfort, my friend when I was lonely.

Over the years, my weight shot up. I was out of breath, my knees hurt.

I was a wreck. By the time I went to my GP, I hit the scales at 30st.

'You must lose weight,' she told me firmly.

'I know I'm big, but...'

I stuttered. 'Bluntly, if you don't lose weight, you may only have five

years left,' she told me.

Five years then I die?

I had to die!

But how?

I'd tried every diet going over the years. Nothing had worked.

I'd been up and down more times than a fiddler's elbow.

My eating disorder was way out of control. Something drastic had to be done.

So I went to see an obesity surgeon, Mr Shaw Somers, at one of his clinics in Chichester.

'I recommend surgery,' he told me. 'A gastric bypass.'

So in February 2006, I was wheeled into theatre for my operation.

I was scared... terrified in fact.

But as I opened my eyes in recovery, I breathed a sigh of relief.

I'd made it!

My first meal?

It was a single

teaspoon of jelly!

'I'm stuffed,' I groaned.

Back home, my new life began.

I could only manage thimble-sized food portions.

Even then, I sometimes struggled to finish them.

Did I miss food?

You bet!

But the weight began falling off me. I lost a stone a month.

Suddenly, I wasn't so out of breath walking to the shops. My old clothes hung loose.

But soon there was something else hanging off me, too.

A massive tent of loose skin where my belly used to be!

An apron of fat, hanging right down! *Yuk!*

It was almost as bad as being

obese. I had to lift it up to go to the loo.

I couldn't even find knickers to fit.

So I went in for operation number two – to get rid of my fat apron!

My first operation had been for my kids. Trying to save my own life so I'd be around for them – and one day, for their kids, too.

But this operation was just for me!

Mr Somers sliced off half a stone of flab.

Such a relief. Now, I'm 11-and-a-half stone and people tell me I look great.

But when I look in the mirror, I still see a fat person.

My friends used to describe me as being large and loud.

Now I'm not sure who I am.

I suppose I'm half the woman I used to be.

And it may take me some time to get to know exactly who she is...

10 Flab-tastic FACTOR



What is abdominoplasty?



Commonly known as a tummy tuck, it's an op to remove excess fat and skin from your stomach. It can tighten your abdominal muscles, improve stretchmarks and give you a flatter belly. To do this, the surgeon slices from

hip to hip above your bikini line, and then cuts out your belly button. Excess fat is removed and the skin is pulled down. Then the excess skin is trimmed off, too. Finally, the surgeon repositions your belly button and stitches you up.