

## 'Food was my enemy'

**T**aking our seats in the cinema, the kids were excited and couldn't wait to see the film. But all I wanted was the snacks.

Popcorn, hot dogs, pick 'n' mix – I used our family outings to the cinema, seaside or park as an excuse to gorge myself.

Food was the friend I turned to in times of turmoil. But it was my enemy, too, as I hated how big I'd become.

After a messy divorce at 30, I'd tried to cheer myself up by scoffing biscuits, but loathed the 14st frame that emerged.

Luckily, when I met my now husband Allan, 34, in 2005, he didn't care about my size, even when having our two children saw me reach 16st.

By 2010, I'd reached 16st 8lb and got breathless climbing the stairs. Every morning, my eyes would fill with tears as I threw on the same shapeless old clothes.

### Freeing myself

I felt so self-conscious in front of Allan that our sex life disappeared.

That's when I knew I had to do something.

I'd toyed with the idea of having a gastric band. At £7,500, it was expensive, but we raised the money together. Surgery might be seen as the lazy option, but I was desperate. So in 2010, I had the hour-long op.

Afterwards, it was tough living off thin soups and mashed potato and learning to chew slowly. But two years on, I'm 9st 8lb and a size 10. I no longer get the urge to binge and can only eat small amounts.



**Now**



**Then**

My gastric band is like a little angel on my shoulder, keeping me in

check. But I don't spend every waking moment thinking about food. I feel free again.

And while I know Allan loves me whatever size I am, our relationship is better than ever. Not because I'm thin – because I've got my sparkle back.

**CAROLINE AGATE, 39, FROM KENT**



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