

'I was hypnotised in to believing I'd had a gastric band fitted'

Lying on the operating table, the surgical smell of anaesthetic hit me. I could hear the beeping heart monitor and the hum of voices as I drifted in and out of consciousness. My stomach tightened, then everything went black.

"I'm going to count to 10 and you'll wake up feeling alert," said a soft, female voice. On her fifth count, my eyes opened and I saw the hypnotist smiling at me. "So have you done it?" I asked. "Maybe..." she replied.

I thought back over our session and vaguely recalled being in hospital, but everything else was a blur. My stomach felt tight and I wondered if I'd had the surgery, but then my tummy grumbled and I assumed it was hunger pangs.

Leaving the clinic, I grabbed a baguette and got into my car. I took a couple of bites and felt full. 'That's odd,' I thought. Usually I'd have scoffed the lot. Then the surgical smell hit me again. I wound down the window, my head spinning. Was I dreaming or had I just had a gastric band fitted?

I was 14 when I started feeling conscious about my weight. I was a size-14 with a big bust and felt huge compared to my skinny friends. Mum's home-cooking was partly to blame. She dished up big portions of shepherd's pie and lasagne and, while

Marion Corns, 35, was desperate to lose weight. So she tried a revolutionary new treatment to beat the bulge – with miraculous results

my brother, Jeff, now 39, and sister, Dawn, 36, could eat anything and stay slim, I piled on the pounds.

I felt miserable and comfort-ate. I tried slimming clubs, pills, even a personal trainer but, after losing a few pounds, I'd put it all on again.

At 21, I met my husband Simon, now 44, in the bar where I worked. He was a customer and I'd always moan to him about my size-16 figure. "I think you're beautiful," he'd say.

We fell in love, got married and had three girls, Helen, now 13, Emily, 10, and Charlotte, nine. Juggling family life, my eating got out of control. I'd skip breakfast, eat rounds of bacon sandwiches for lunch and dish up huge servings of dinner.

I put on a happy front, but inside I was really depressed. So when we

moved to Spain in 2005, I thought, 'Fantastic, I'll definitely lose weight with the weather and healthy living.'

How wrong could I be? We got swept up in the lifestyle, drinking red wine and eating paella. By the end of the year, I was a size-20 and felt horrendous. I knew I had to do something and my thoughts turned to weight-loss surgery, but I could never afford the £7000 price tag.

Then, in June 2008, my friend Lisa called to say that she'd been having hypnotherapy in Fuengirola to help her quit smoking. She'd asked if they had any weight-loss solutions.

"I couldn't believe it when I heard they can hypnotise someone into believing they've had a gastric band fitted," Lisa said. "Isn't that amazing?"

It certainly was. I was so excited that I called the clinic straightaway to arrange an appointment. When I got there a few days later, I was nervous, but the therapist, Marion Shirran, soon put me at ease.

She explained that the treatment would involve five hypnotherapy sessions where she'd



She is now delighted with the results of her 'mental' gastric band

explore my relationship with food and mentally fit the gastric band. It would be £680, but Lisa's treatment had been so successful that I was confident this would work.

"Your mind will think you've had the op and you'll start to lose weight, but without the pain or health risks of a real gastric band," Marion said.

"It'll never work," Simon said back at home. But I had nothing to lose. I only confided in my parents and daughters, as I knew most people would react like Simon. They were excited and vowed to support me.

I had my first session on 1 July 2008 and felt nervous. I filled out a detailed questionnaire on my diet

history, eating habits and goals, and then I was hypnotised...

Lying in the chair, Marion told me to relax. My eyes felt heavy and, before I knew it, I was gone. About 30 minutes later she said, "I'll count to 10 and you'll wake up feeling alert."

I opened my eyes and felt relaxed. "Can you remember anything at all?" Marion asked.

"Not much," I replied. "Except you saying that it's important to eat breakfast."

Marion explained when someone has a real gastric band, the consultant prepares their body for the restricted intake of food by putting them on a diet three weeks before to get them used to eating less. "I'll train your mind in the same way," she said. "I'll make subtle suggestions about eating smaller portions to get ready for the operation."

I left the clinic feeling positive and, that evening, I only had a small helping of paella for my dinner. "What on earth's got into you?" Simon asked, surprised. "I don't know, it must be the hypnotherapy," I replied. I was bowled over by how quickly my attitude to food changed. I'd eat

fruit for breakfast, rice cakes and soup for lunch, and a small portion of the family meal in the evening. I felt less bloated and more energetic.

In the second session, Marion repeated the same positive messages about healthy eating and, by my third appointment, I'd lost 9lb.

"Today, we're going to prepare you for the op," Marion said, dimming the lights as I closed my eyes. She started talking softly and, suddenly, in my head, I was having my pre-op check-up. A nurse took my blood pressure, then everything became hazy. Moments later, Marion was counting to 10 and I was awake again. It had seemed so real that I really felt like I'd been in hospital.

In the fourth session, Marion showed me a model of a stomach and a gastric band and told me how it worked. Before long, I'd drifted into a deep hypnotic state. I was lying on an operating table and I could feel a pulling sensation in my stomach. Then I heard Marion's voice. Afterwards, my tummy felt tight. The op had seemed like a dream, but I couldn't eat much without feeling sick. It went on, and by the time I saw Marion again I'd lost another 3lb. "Did I have the gastric band fitted last week?" I asked her. "Yes, you did," she replied. In the final session, Marion made the band tighter. When I came

around, my tummy felt like it was in knots and I could hardly eat a thing. That night, I lay awake in shock. I couldn't believe I'd been hypnotised into believing I had a gastric band fitted. It was mind-boggling.

It's now been five months since I had the 'op' and I've lost 3st, taking me from a size-20 to a size 12-14. I'm still to reach my target weight of 11st, but I'm much happier and I can wear pretty clothes. Simon is surprised by the results and thinks I look great. I recently visited my parents in the UK and my dad didn't even recognise me.

My diet has stayed healthy and my portion sizes small. As with 'real' gastric bands, bread bloats me and fizzy drinks cause me discomfort. The only downside is I worry I'll lapse, but I'll physically feel sick if I overeat just like I would if I had a real gastric band, so I really don't know how that could happen.

Marion has assured me that she can 'mentally' remove the band, so I will think about that once I've reached my target weight. For now, though, I'm just enjoying my mind-bending transformation!

As told to Amisha Surani

For more information about the revolutionary new gastric mind band (GmB) therapy visit www.eliteclinics.com or tel: 0034 951 311 591.

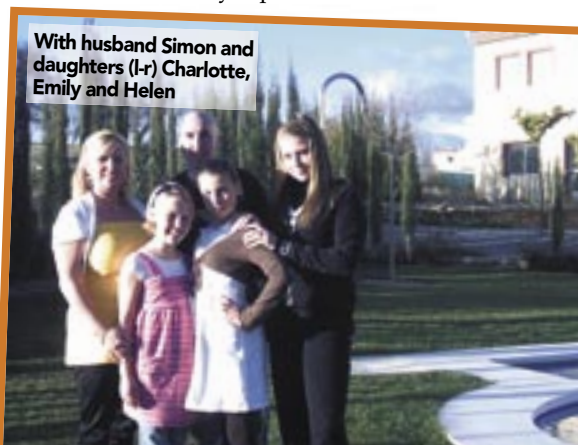
Gastric Mind Band (GmB) – how does it work?



MARION AND MARTIN SHIRRAN, creators of the GmB and founders of the Elite Clinics says: "The GmB therapy is not just a temporary solution based on a particular diet; as well as using the concept of having a gastric band fitted 'mentally' to help reduce portion sizes, the sessions also incorporate cognitive behaviour therapy and neuro-linguistic programming to encourage you to rethink your attitude to food, and move away from dieting. The GmB treatment introduces you to a new lifestyle of healthy eating, that will help you to achieve and maintain your ideal weight easily, and boost your self-esteem in the process."



ELLIOT WALD, weight-loss hypnosis expert and member of The Hypnotherapy Association says: "Although in theory the concept is good and could work, the Elite Clinics have harnessed the unique selling point that the patient is having a 'mental' gastric band when, in fact, other methods during the sessions probably contribute more to the weight-loss rather than the 'op'. The procedure would work with some patients, but they'd have to be motivated to stick with the strict programme. I believe successful weight-loss through hypnotherapy must address the mind, exercise and nutrition through a series of sessions, rather than just five as with GmB."



With husband Simon and daughters (l-r) Charlotte, Emily and Helen