

● AN innovative treatment for paralysed people is currently undergoing tests. A stem-cell therapy has seen marked improvements when tested on mice, and it could lead to paralysed people walking again. The treatment only works if you've recently been paralysed, and involves a specialised type of cell being injected into the patient's spine, where the break took place, which will heal the damaged nerve endings.



I lost three stones due to power of thought

IN the last few months, I've lost over three stones in weight after being fitted with a gastric band.

However, I have no operation scar to show, because this band is all in the mind.

I was hypnotised into thinking my stomach had been restricted to the size of a golf ball and, since then, I've only been able to eat tiny portions at a time.

I'm lighter than since I was around 12, gone down from a dress size 20 to a 12-14, and feel so much healthier and fitter as a result.

I first began to worry about my weight in my early teens. I was a size 14 and felt bigger than all my friends.

New start

From time to time, I'd go on a diet, but I always loved my food.

I was a size 16 when I met my husband, Simon, but my weight didn't bother him, and we now have three beautiful daughters Helen, 14, Emily, 11, and Charlotte, nine.

After the girls were born, my weight kept creeping up.

Over the years, I tried every form of diet going. I attended slimming clubs and had injections, but nothing worked for me.

In 2005, we moved to Spain. I was really looking forward to a new start, and felt sure

MARION CORNS EXPLAINS WHY HER GASTRIC BAND IS ALL IN THE MIND

I'd lose weight living in the sun and eating a healthier diet — but it had the opposite effect.

We soon made a lot of friends, and the sociable lifestyle led to eating and drinking more, and my weight shot up.

By the end of the year, I was a size 20 and miserable.

I would have jumped at the chance of gastric band surgery, but we didn't have the money (it costs around £7000).

Then, my best friend in Spain went to the Elite clinic in Fuengirola for treatment to stop smoking.

She discovered that the clinic had a new therapy called Gastric Mind Band (GMB), which used various therapies and hypnosis to make you believe you'd had the surgical procedure.

There was no risk like there was from surgery and, at 795 euros, it was a fraction of the cost.

I made an appointment to see Marion Shirran, who runs the clinic with her husband Martin.

She explained that the treatment would involve five sessions, which would explore my eating habits and diet history, and would use a variety of methods.

Smaller portions

When I went home after the first session, I found I couldn't eat anything like the same amount of food that I'd normally have for dinner.

I'd never been keen on breakfast, but I'd think nothing of having four rounds of toast and bacon later in the day, followed by a massive dinner at night, then a family-sized bag of crisps in front of the TV.

Instead, I began to eat fruit for breakfast, soup for lunch and much smaller portions of food for dinner.

By my third session with Marion, I'd already lost nine pounds.

During the sessions, I was told what would happen during real gastric band surgery, and was shown a melon and a golf ball, which demonstrated the difference in size of my stomach before and after the operation.

On my fourth visit, I was put into a deep hypnotic state.

I can remember feeling as though I was in a lift, being taken to the operating theatre, the smell of anaesthetic and a pulling sensation in my stomach.

When I came round, I felt the same as after the other sessions but, when I left the clinic, I decided to treat myself to a baguette.

I could only eat a third of it as I felt so full up.

I had the treatment last July and, since then, I've lost over three stones, and am still slowly losing weight.

At Christmas, we all came home to Liverpool to see our family.

One of the things I'd been craving since we'd gone to Spain was some Kentucky Fried Chicken but, when I finally got there, I only managed to eat one of their mini portions of food.

Although I enjoyed it at the time, I felt ill afterwards and had to go to bed.

At Christmas dinner, I only had tiny portions and, when the big tin of chocolates was passed round later, I only managed a couple before I'd had enough.

Our eating habits as a family have changed as well.

I'm determined the girls won't have the same problems as I did.

Recently, my daughter Helen bought herself a new pair of jeans and I asked to try them.

I was delighted to find that I could get into them, though I'm not sure she was very pleased!

I still have a little bit to go before I'm down to my target weight, but I've vowed I'll never put all the pounds I've lost back on.

● As told to Hazel Crossan



Client's joke led to new approach towards weight loss

MARTIN SHIRRAN (pictured), who runs the clinic where Marion had her treatment, explained how the idea for GMB therapy came about.

"It was a few years ago, when one of our clients joked that she'd like gastric band surgery without the operation, and would prefer it if we could just hypnotise her into thinking it had taken place," said Martin.

"That got us thinking and, over the

next couple of years, we started working on the idea.

"GMB therapy is a combination of Hypnotherapy, Cognitive Behaviour Therapy, Neuro Linguistic Programming and Guided Imagery, all geared towards the individual client.

"It's designed to make people rethink their attitude to food."

This takes place over several sessions before the "operation", where

a variety of special effects are used to mimic the feeling of having surgery, including special lighting, the temperature of the room, and having the scent of anaesthetic wafting around so that people really feel as though surgery has taken place.

Once all the elements were in place, Martin offered to try out the treatment himself.

He's battled with his weight for

25 years, reaching 18st 3lbs at his heaviest.

In May, 2008, when he started GMB therapy, he weighed 17st. Since then, he's lost 51lbs.

"This is a completely new approach to weight loss, and we've had interest from all over the world," added Martin.

For further information, go to www.eliteclinics.com or www.gmband.com