

“I was headed for an early grave”

Rebecca Fyfe, 38, from Swindon, conquered her weight problem during her seventh pregnancy

BEFORE

From a size 28...



AFTER

... to a size 10



“As a teenager I’d always struggled with my weight and because of that

I decided I never wanted more than two children. However, after giving birth to three beautiful girls and then meeting the man of my dreams, my views changed. I knew I wanted a big family, but little did I know the problems that lay ahead.

A WHIRLWIND ROMANCE

I was living in California attending university as an English major, when my friends decided to plan a trip to the UK. Wanting to find out the best places to visit, I went online and began chatting to Robert, 47, who lived out there. We clicked and after months of talking, I finally flew out for a 10-day visit in January 2000. Little did I know I would be meeting the love of my life for the first time.

We were a perfect match and after a year he proposed. It was a beautiful wedding and Robert even adopted my three daughters. We flew out all the time to visit one another, but after a while

I knew a decision had to be made. Trying to find a job in California was difficult and being away from Robert for long periods of time soon became unbearable. At five months pregnant with our honeymoon baby, I decided to move to the UK in June 2002.

BIG BOMBSHELL

It was difficult adjusting to life in Swindon as my weight made me feel extremely self-conscious and now with our first child together, Gabriella, I had four little ones to look after. Before I knew it, I was pregnant with my fifth child. It was a normal pregnancy until the last trimester.

My blood pressure

dramatically shot up as a result of my weight, and the doctors couldn’t get it to come down. When they induced me, it rose again to dangerously high levels. Scared, I clutched Robert’s hand and just stared at the room full of doctors, midwives and nurses. I gave birth to my fifth daughter, Isabella, but was warned this wasn’t a one-off as my blood pressure would rise with every future pregnancy.

Then I got pregnant with my sixth child, so I decided to take action. I headed to Weight Watchers, but left feeling deflated as they didn’t have a plan for pregnant women. I used it as an excuse to just carry on the way I was.

As time went by, I got bad heel pain and suffered with an overflow of the hormone you get in pregnancy that loosens your ligaments, giving me severe hip problems. Early in my 2nd trimester my blood pressure shot up and I spent a week in hospital. Then one week before my due date it shot up again. In the hospital, as I held my stomach, they induced me. I gave birth to a beautiful boy named Connor, and eventually my blood pressure came down to a manageable level.

DIFFICULT DECISION

Robert and I sat and talked at length about whether we should have a seventh child. After the risks we’d already encountered, I knew I had to lose the weight first. Then, unbelievably, I found out I was pregnant again, and all that was running through my mind was that I was 20



One big happy family

stone, which couldn't be good for the baby or me.

I waited until I was 12 weeks, then called up a friend of mine who kept telling me how much weight a relative of hers had lost through Slimming World. I wanted to start being healthy without jeopardising the pregnancy, so in June 2008 I took a chance and went to a Slimming World meeting.

Shaking a little, I entered thinking I would never be able to lose the weight, and wasn't even sure it was ok for me to try when pregnant. They put me on a plan of eating healthy, fresh produce, limiting only my sweets and bread. They even made me get permission from my midwife to make sure I wouldn't be causing any damage to my baby.

SHOCK MOMENT

Adjusting to the food-optimising scheme was a weird experience as I was eating as I always did, but cooking meals from scratch instead of having takeaways. I kept strict with it and in the first week I lost 3½ lbs. I couldn't believe I'd lost weight in such a short period of time. Motivated, I decided to keep a journal of what I was eating to track my progress. Writing it down lifted the pressure and was a gentle reminder not to give up.

After a few months I was feeling great, especially as everybody kept telling me how much thinner I was in the face. I knew I'd hit a big milestone when I got my hips through the child safety door without brushing them.

Little things like that told me I was losing weight, but in the right places. I still had a growing belly, and just looking at my bump reminded me the baby was doing ok. As I continued to power



Pregnant for the seventh time, outside Buckingham Palace

on with my weight loss I had regular visits from my midwife, who kept an eye on my blood pressure. I kept expecting it to go up and to be in that horrible situation again, but it was staying in the normal ranges. Exercising daily with Robert by my side and eating healthily, I knew what I was doing was beneficial for my little one, no matter how difficult the journey.

SPECIAL DELIVERY

By the time of my due date I'd lost 4 stone 9lbs, but the fear in the back of my mind that my blood pressure would shoot up wouldn't leave me. Holding Robert's hand tightly, I couldn't believe it when the nurses told me it was in the normal ranges. It felt surreal, and then when they induced me I knew this was it. Time for my hard work to pay off as I experienced the easiest birth I had out of all seven.



Rebecca celebrates losing the first 100lbs with Cameron

At 12.30am on 15 December 2008 my little boy Cameron was born, weighing 6lbs. With tears flooding my eyes, I touched my healthy, beautiful baby for the first time. I recovered quickly, going home the same day instead of four days afterwards. A few weeks after heading home, I could see just how much my body had changed as the swelling from my labour went down. I looked like a new woman, and felt like a new mum.

THE FINISH LINE

On 20 September 2009 I reached the 10-stone weight lost mark and immediately went shopping for new clothes. I had more confidence and my kids were seeing this by how hands on I was. In March 2010 Robert and I even came second in the Slimming World Couple of the Year awards, which was an overwhelming experience. As I gazed into his eyes, I finally felt content with who I was.

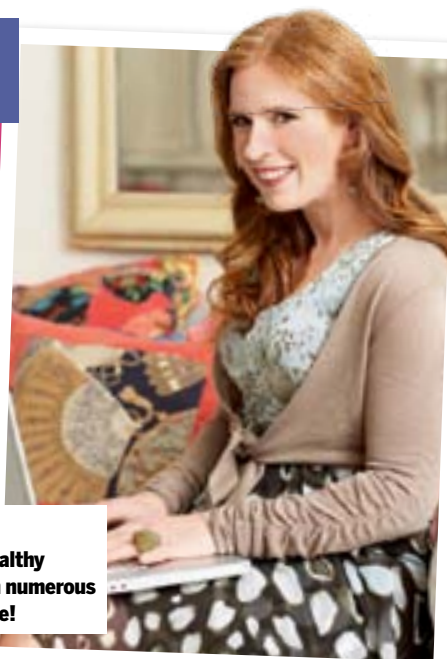
HAPPIER FUTURE

We make sure that we're setting a good example for our kids by letting them know what food makes their bones big and strong, and stressing the importance of exercise. I've completely replenished my life, my relationship is stronger, and I've gone from an unhappy size 28 to a happy size 10. I now feel like super mum!" **PPP**

REBECCA'S TOP THREE WEIGHT LOSS TIPS

- 1** Make your own food, especially sauces. I remove the oil and any flour, meaning they're lower in calories and extremely healthy.
- 2** Instead of taking the bus into town I walk and make sure I buy some shopping so I can work my arm muscles on the way back.
- 3** Instead of paying out for the gym, take some tins from the cupboard and run up and down the stairs. It's simple to do and easily fits around your hectic schedule.

Award winner
Since starting her new healthy lifestyle Rebecca has won numerous awards – and lost 10 stone!



To find your nearest Slimming World group visit slimmingworld.com or call 0844 897 8000. Please consult your doctor before embarking on any weight loss programme while pregnant.