

# *Then and Now...*



Above, a photo of Carroll before her surgery. At her heaviest, she weighed 328 pounds and wore between a size 28 and 30. Right, a slim Carroll, now in a size 16, enjoys her newfound energy and plans to celebrate the anniversary of her surgery by skydiving! Carroll says she plans to lose an additional 45 pounds.

## **Share your success story**

Have you or someone you know experienced a notable weight-loss success? HealthWise is looking for Mid Shore residents who have lost weight through a variety of methods — fitness, diet programs, or like Alicia, one of several surgical procedures such as gastric-bypass.

If you would like to inspire others with your weight loss story and be considered to be profiled in an upcoming HealthWise edition, please contact HealthWise Editor Kristine George at 410-770-4107

# Easton woman, 40, sheds 122 pounds thanks to gastric bypass

• Carroll plans special skydiving trip on anniversary of Aug. '03 surgery

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Alicia Carroll had tried all the diets. But nothing had seemed to control her rising blood pressure.

Finally on July 28, 2003, the 40-year-old underwent a procedure that shed 122 pounds from her 328 pound body and \$24,000 from her bank account.

Her journey began in April of 2003 after she consulted Dr. Michael Safronski at the Peninsula Regional Hospital in Salisbury, who recommended XYRI Gastric-Bypass surgery.

Keeping a meticulous food diary, and relying on a high-protein, low-carb, and low-fat diet, Carroll lost 28 pounds before the surgery. Carroll was aware of the risks involved in such a procedure, but she admits, "Surgery was fine."

She was in the hospital from that Monday through Thursday, and walked out feeling smaller, lighter, and bearing a four-inch, vertical incision healing nicely across her stomach.

Carroll admits the first weeks after her surgery were quite a challenge — it took a week of liquids, a couple weeks of puréed foods after that, and then a painfully gradual process of adding more solid foods.

"In the beginning, after surgery, I thought what in the world have I done," she admits. "I couldn't eat anything!"

She still has trouble eating untoasted bread and drinking sodas.

"The bubbles just don't settle right," she says.

Carroll eats five small meals a day, primarily low-fat, protein based and takes a variety of

min supplements. She's allowed no alcohol for an entire year. Fortunately for Carroll, her friends and family are supportive.

"They stood behind me the whole way," she says.

These days, her energy level has gone up and she feels fantastic.

"I feel wonderful!" she says, beaming.

She was walking up a steep road in D.C. recently and when she got to the top she turned around and realized the progress she had made.

"This time last year, I would have been huffing and puffing," she says.

Would she recommend this surgery to someone else?

"It's a decision you have to make for yourself," she says. "You are the one who has to go through it."

Would she do it again? Absolutely. Carroll says she sees a nutritionist, an exercise therapist, and every Thursday in Salisbury a group of anywhere from 10-50 people, either recovering from surgery or getting ready to have it, get together and voice their concerns, questions, fears, and anxieties.

"Not only do you research your surgeon," she advises, "You research your aftercare."

People come into the News Center — the bookstore/cafe in Easton where Carroll has worked since 1987 — and ask her, "Are you the lady who had the surgery?"

"Yep," she answers proudly.

On Aug. 7, Alicia will skydive for the first time out of an airplane over Allenwood, N.J. with her 70-year-old uncle. Why? Because she's finally made it under the weight restriction.

Carroll's weight loss journey is not over yet, though.

"I still have a ways to go — Dr. Safronski said I should probably lose another 45 pounds or so," she says. "My goal is a solid size 12 — that would make me feel so