

POST HEALTH

A GRANDMOTHER who spent 25 years suffering chronic back pain has been reunited with the world-renowned plastic surgeon who gave her back her life after breast reduction surgery.

Gladys Healey, 65, underwent breast reduction surgery at the private Spire Yale Hospital in Wrexham after being crippled with spinal pain from the weight of her EE cup bust.

The backache became so severe over time that the grandmother-of-two, from Hope, near Wrexham, could no longer climb the stairs or walk to her own kitchen. Eventually, she was forced to take five months off from her health job.

The former healthcare support worker, who is standing as a candidate for the Hope ward in the Flintshire County Council elections in May, underwent breast reduction surgery under the care of internationally acclaimed cosmetic plastic surgeon Mr Fahmy S Fahmy, which reduced her cup size from an EE to a C.

The mother-of-two, who worked on the orthopaedic department of the Wrexham Maelor before retiring in 2015, described the surgery as the best decision she's ever made and said it had given her back her life.

"From the day I got out of bed at the Spire Yale I felt fantastic. The relief was instant and amazing. I literally couldn't put it into words," she said.

"The back problems ceased immediately and I'm no longer on any pain medication. Prior to the operation I was on very strong pain relief and at work taking paracetamol every four hours to get me through the day.

"Now I'm able to do many things I couldn't do. My husband, David, 66, used to have to wait for me to catch up when out and about, now I'm waiting for him.

"I would highly recommend this surgery to anyone suffering like I was. I became desperate and would've tried anything to avoid being crippled. Mr Fahmy is a great surgeon and I cannot thank him enough for giving me my life back. I just wish this treatment was available on the NHS."

Mr Fahmy, consultant cosmetic and plastic surgeon at Spire Yale Hospital, said most patients seeking breast reduction surgery suffered from shoulder pain, neck ache, persistent "dragging" pain and discomfort from bras digging into their shoulders.

"Not only does the look and size of the bras affect self-esteem but very often there is the need for custom-made bras that can be costly and inconvenient," said the 54-year-old.

"It's a life changing operation, it improves self-confidence, offers more clothing choice, relieves physical symptoms and it's even cost-effective as there is no longer the need to buy special bras.

"Very often, you hear patients

Breast reduction has given me back my life



OP FREES GRAN FROM 25 YEARS OF CHRONIC BACK PAIN

Plastic surgeon Dr Saad Fahmy with Gladys Healey, 65, who has recently undergone breast reduction surgery, and nurse Lynn Thelwell PIC: MANDY JONES/EYE IMAGERY

saying 'We feel taller'. I suppose this could be a reflection of more confidence or maybe a better posture.

"The breast reduction surgery involves reducing the size of the breast, the size of the nipple and at the same time reshaping and lifting up the breasts," he said.

"The surgery has a very high satisfaction rate. There is no age limit as such for breast reduction. Patients can be as young as 18 years old and I've had patients in their 80s.

"The majority of people can resume most daily activities within few days but it's advisable to avoid anything too physical for six weeks."

Gladys, who has two daughters and two granddaughters aged nine and 18 months, said the pain in her spine started shortly after she turned 40.

"The pain used to radiate down my leg. It was gradually getting worse," she said. "I was given a cortisone injection for my spine which worked

for a while and then gradually the pain kept coming back and I was so frightened. They gave me another injection under X-ray.

"The weight of my breasts was pulling on my spine. I tried to lose weight but I wasn't overweight in the first place. My breasts didn't reduce and became lopsided.

"I had to take five months off work. I was at home on heavy medication and virtually disabled. All I could do was sit in a chair. If I got up and went into my kitchen I would be in such severe pain that I'd be slumped over my worktop and would hold my head in my hands in pain. There was nothing the GP could do for me.

"It was difficult to lift my grandchildren when they were babies and once they'd started walking I just couldn't do it any more, I could only sit in a chair and watch them.

"My husband and I came to the conclusion that I needed breast

reduction surgery."

Gladys booked an appointment with Mr Fahmy on recommendation.

The plastic surgeon, who trained in hospitals in Bristol, Exeter and Plymouth in his early career before heading to the North West, developed a breakthrough breast reduction technique which has now been adopted by many surgeons throughout the world and was published in the Plastic Reconstructive Surgery American journal as well as other international publications.

Mr Fahmy, who is credited with developing and establishing cosmetic surgery at Spire Yale Hospital over the past 16 years, has authored numerous publications in international medical literature for cosmetic and plastic surgery.

"The operation itself was very quick. I was only in theatre for about two to three hours," said Gladys. "I'm now able to go out with my

husband walking. I can climb the stairs. There are ladies out there suffering with back and shoulder pain and this surgery can change your life.

"It has changed my life 100%. I'd suffered with back pain for well over 20 years, almost as soon as I became 40. When I was a young girl, before I had my children, my breasts were a C cup, the same as now post-surgery."

The former Unison branch officer is now looking forward to getting more involved in her local community, starting with a quest to become a local councillor.

"I have a new lease of life," she said. "My health has improved 100% as well as my quality of life. It's a permanent fix although you do obviously have to watch your weight

"There are people out there really suffering. Their quality of life will be severely affected and I think everyone should have access to this treatment that needs it."