



WEIGHT IS OVER



1. Lisa Mueller
 ■ Before surgery: Weight 339 lbs. Size 26/28
 ■ Current weight 170 lbs. Size: 12/14

2. Ed Mueller
 ■ Before surgery: Weight 280 lbs. Size 42
 ■ Current weight 180 lbs. Size: 34

3. Myra Blundetto
 ■ Before surgery: Weight 220 lbs. Size 22
 ■ Current weight 140 lbs. Size: 10/12

4. Caren Frech
 ■ Before surgery: Weight 246 lbs. size 22/24
 ■ Current weight 136 lbs. Size: 8/10

By CHUCK BENNETT

There's nothing like a little shared gastric-bypass surgery to bring a family together.

New Jersey matriarch Myra Blundetto, her two adult daughters and her son-in-law all had the fat-melting procedure within the past five years.

The four former fatties collectively lost nearly a quarter-ton, dropping from a total of 1,085 pounds to just slightly more than 600 pounds.

"It was life-changing," beamed the 68-year-old grandmother from Lafayette in Sussex County, who went from a size 22 to a size 10 after the stomach-stapling surgery in February 2006.

Indeed, words such as "blossoming," "transforming," "life-changing" and "life-saving" were often repeated as the family told The Post about their decades-long struggle with obesity during a Mother's Day reunion.

Since their teenage years, Myra's daughters struggled with weight — a problem that only

Family uses surgery to shed quarter-ton

grew worse after they had families of their own. They talked about their lack of exercise, polishing off bags of Oreos in one sitting and of literally fighting each other for the last morsel on the dinner table. Diseases like diabetes, hypertension and chronic back problems were a real threat to the family.

So they yo-yo'd on diets, but nothing seemed to work until the surgery.

Myra was actually the last in the clan to get her stomach clipped.

"I was inspired by my children, seeing how well they did and how it changed them for the better," she said. "They were healthier. They were happier."

It was Myra's daughter, Lisa

Blundetto Mueller — now an attractive 44-year-old and size 12 — who first went under the knife in 2002.

"I felt like if I did this surgery, this is my last attempt to get myself back in health. I risked it. I thought, either the surgery will kill me or my weight will kill me," she said.

Lisa, who at 5-foot-10 once weighed 339 pounds, dropped to about 170 pounds within a year.

"I got a new wife out of the deal," said her husband, Ed, 57. "So I figured I ought to give her a new husband."

Ed, a lawn-and-garden supply salesman, had his operation in 2003 and went from 280 pounds to 180 in a year. He lost 90 pounds in five months.

"I can chase my two little girls up the driveway now," he said.

Then came surgery for older sister Caren Blundetto Frech, 47, in July 2005.

Months before Lisa had the surgery, Caren refused to talk to her, saying the operation was too risky. But after seeing her sister's dramatic results, she changed her mind.

"My son Chris said, 'I can put my arms around Aunt Lisa now,'" Caren said. After her own surgery, Caren dropped from 246 pounds to 136 pounds.

"It's not unusual to see families," said Dr. Joe Capella, who along with his father, Dr. Rafael Capella, performed either bypass or cosmetic work on the four. "They see firsthand the power of it, how it had a positive impact on their health and a powerful boost for self-esteem."

An estimated 200,000 Americans have gastric bypass surgery a year — a procedure that creates a smaller stomach with staples or bands that physically prevent a person from overeating.