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PRESS RELEASE

Blackpool patient savours her new life

A NEWLY MARRIED Lytham woman has got her hunger for life back after undergoing a life changing gallbladder removal.

Christina Valentine, 54, was suffering from gallstones and was awaiting her scheduled operation when she began to suffer from severe pain. Knowing something was wrong, her husband rushed her to Blackpool Victoria Hospital.

She said: "I had been suffering from gallstones for three months and although I was already on the waiting list for a gallbladder removal, I was suddenly hit with such unbearable pain that I asked my husband to take me to A&E.

"I was still working and had tried to manage the intense pain for two weeks, but my emotional and physical state was lower than it had ever been and I felt that I really needed help."

Gallstones can cause excruciating pain in the abdomen as Mrs Valentine unfortunately found out on her Honeymoon. After getting married at Gretna Green in March this year, Christina and her husband were enjoying their celebratory getaway in Spain when she was unfortunately left bed bound and in agony after suffering four gallbladder attacks.

With the severe pain, discomfort and impact that the gallstones were having on Christina's body and her overall state of wellbeing, she was also finding it very difficult to eat or gain any nutritional substance from food.

She continued: "During the months leading up to my unfortunate A&E dash, I was hardly eating at all. The positive aspect was that I lost over two stone, but having always had a passion for cooking and being a Cordon Bleu chef, my illness definitely took the enjoyment out of food."

Christina went on to have her gallbladder removed and was extremely pleased with her care and treatment.

Talking about her experiences in the hours leading up to the surgery, she said: "I was taken to the brand new theatre suite and was received by the wonderful anaesthetic team. They were most reassuring and kind and although I was extremely anxious, they made the experience bearable. They were all very lovely and calm and always kept smiling.

“I quickly went under their spell and later woke up in the recovery room. All the staff in recovery were great and quick to manage my pain. I was much relieved to hear that my operation had been a great success and that my ordeal of the last three months was finally over.”

Christina has now returned to her job and love of cooking and is now able to tuck into a variety of different foods that her illness once prohibited.

She said; “It is now nine weeks since I was operated on and I am fully recovered, having suffered no complications whatsoever. I have my life back again and I'm enjoying eating a little bit of whatever I fancy without suffering.

“I cannot put into words how thankful I am to all the staff at Blackpool Victoria Hospital, everyone - the kitchen team, for nourishing, tasty fresh food, the cleaning team, the porters and everyone behind the scenes - thank you all for helping to make my stay a good one.”

Commenting on her surgery and her surgeon; Mr Heath, Christina said: “What was probably a routine operation for Mr Heath was a massive life changing experience for me. Having given birth to five children, including twins, I can honestly say that the pain from gallstones is far worse than labour and childbirth. You all did a great job; I will never, ever forget you!”

The successful surgery also meant that Christina and her husband could also celebrate their marriage properly. “Three weeks after my operation, my husband surprised me by whisking me back to Spain for our second honeymoon, where we had the most perfect holiday together.

“Good health is precious and my illness has made me realise how fortunate I am to be fit and well again.” Christina added.

Mr Heath, Consultant Surgeon at Blackpool Teaching Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust, said: “I was delighted to hear that Christina improved so much following her surgery. We try to get the best possible outcomes for all of the patients we see at the Trust and it is extremely satisfying when we can improve someone's life so dramatically.”



Caption: Christina Valentine

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