Indian Express

Cut, snip, staple—the latest way to lose weig

ctors report rise in number of obese patients opting for minimally invasive surgery, say it will soon be as common as cardiac s

HI JATANIA
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R 36-year-old Nirav Rijhwani, dealing s obesity, coupled with high blood pres- nd hyperacidity, was a nightmare. "I 't travel by train and would feel miserable es," says the construction businessman. t was a year ago. Today, post-surgery, Ri- is proudly showing off his new self—his has reduced from 140 kg to 90 kg.

ought I would turn into a Sumo wrestler cided it was time I did something about blem," says the Kalyan resident who for gastric bypass surgery at Bombay l in January 2004.

wani is not an isolated case. According rs, the trend of obese patients opting for to get rid of the excess fat is fast catching city.

problem of obesity is growing here,' ex- r Ramen Goel, consultant Bariatric sur- ombay Hospital, Marine Lines.

it's as bad as in the US, only the over- people in our country are hiding." In a hat's fast emerging as the diabetes—a n symptom of morbid obesity—capital orld, minimally invasive surgeries *(see* the new catchphrase.

surgeries—a booming business in the he UK, where nearly 1.5 lakh surgeries are carried out annually—help induce satiety for food by creating a smaller stomach.

The change in stomach size means patients eat less. "I used to eat 12 chapatis a day. Now it's only four," smiles Rijhwani.

According to city doctors, 80 to 100 such surgeries are carried out in India annually.

In the city to attend the National Conference of Advancing Research in Obesity, British mid-

At 118 kg, British midwife Sharon Bates (50) couldn't run, wear heels, play with her two children—or get a tan at the beach

Five years on, Bates is 60 kg after gastric-banding surgery, which she's promoting in Mumbai. And yes, she wears those heels

UNDER THE SCALPEL

Gastric Banding: Widely used for those who are overweight by 30 or 40 kg. Surgeons fit a silicon band around the uppermost part of the stomach. Post-surgery, patients must reduce their food portions. "The band reduces stomach size and gives patients a sense of fullness," says Dr Robert Fris, a laparoscopic surgeon from New Zealand, who has conducted 500 weight-loss surgeries. The risk? 1 in 1,000 patients dies.

Gastric Bypass: Surgeons create a separate smaller stomach by stapling and then surgically attach part of the small intestine to the edges of the smaller stomach. "It reduces fat absorption after intake of food volume is restricted," explains Dr Fris. Though it's relatively complex, this surgery has more long-term benefits. Weight loss is quicker and patients lose 60 kg within a year or so. The risk? 2 to 5 of every 100 patients dies.

wife Sharon Bates says "being fat a disability".

Ill-fitting clothes, no high-hee ing breathless after a walk, low Bates went through it all. Five yea cided to go in for gastric bandi despite her family's apprehensio

"Look at me, people say I'm not aggressive," smiles the 50-ye of two who reduced from 118 kg t

With research supporting the t in *The Journal of American Medic* October 2004, says that surgeries chemistry and eliminate conditio heart attacks, kidney failure and d tors say these surgeries are here to

"Patients try everything—slim health foods, even starvation. Now being pegged as the most viable op Shashank Joshi, endocrinologist a gist at Lilavati Hospital and J J Ho Type 2 diabetes reduces considera

Rijhwani will agree. The fathe tried other means—weight-loss pr posuction and drinking herbal te but nothing worked.

"Now, my blood pressure is don't have to take medication f acidity either," he says.