New Straits Times : 24 September 2006 CHERAS: Thazlin Ghouse walks with a lighter step these days &#65533; 64 kilogrammes less, in fact.

"My three children are probably the happiest. Since I lost weight after an operation, they&#65533;ve been overjoyed that I can spend more time with them.

"Before this, I couldn&#65533;t walk without getting out of breath. Now I can play and go out with my children more often," he said.

Thazlin, 43, once weighed a hefty 160kg. All that has changed since he underwent a laparoscopic gastric bypass in February. The shop manager now weighs 96kg.

"I feel much better about myself. I look half the size I was before. Even my diabetes and hypertension are gone."

One of the surgical procedures used to treat obesity, a gastric bypass reduces the holding capacity of one&#65533;s stomach.

A "new" stomach is created by separating a small section from the rest of the patient&#65533;s stomach, connecting it directly to the small bowel, or jejunum.

Because he has a smaller stomach, the patient becomes full earlier, eventually leading to weight loss.

Thazlin, a former patient who attended a public forum on obesity at Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia Hospital (HUKM) yesterday, has no regrets about the surgery. "The side effects are negligible," he said.

His views were echoed by a housewife who wanted to be known only as Wan. She underwent a procedure called laparoscopic gastric banding.

"Children are affected when they have an obese parent. I had no energy to cook for my family. I was too breathless to take them to the playground," said the woman who once weighed 140kg.

Things have changed since Wan lost 35kg. "I can enjoy my family more and I can now go up and down staircases like everyone else.

The forum was launched by HUKM director Prof Datuk Dr Mohammad Razak, who, in his opening speech said the problem of obesity was worse than the problem of famine.

"There are an estimated one billion obese people worldwide, compared to an estimated 800,000 living in starvation.

Obesity rises with development &#65533; the more advanced a country becomes, the more obese people it has," he said.
