

# Life-changing op for bride-to-be

## TREATMENT

MORE THAN one in 20 adults are affected, but many are unaware that they have gallstones.

However for one Leeds mum, the condition had left her with a year of debilitating pain and health problems.

Now, bride-to-be JoJo Louise Hicks can look forward to her wedding this September after successful surgery.

"I know wedding planning can be stressful but I'm going to enjoy every single minute of it," she said. "Now I can get on with my life and look forward to the future together with my family."

The 37-year-old first started suffering from acute pain in her abdomen at the beginning of 2016. However, the pain worsened until she suffered from daily attacks along with nausea, vomiting and headaches.

The mum to nine-year-old Alfie and future step-mum to Ethan, 10, said: "The pain

became horrendous for the last six months before surgery, I couldn't eat without the worry it would bring on an attack and my sleep was disrupted. I went back and forth for blood tests as they tried to find out the cause. It was very stressful."

She and fiancé Michael tried to keep her illness from her son, but he could see she was in pain.

"Once, we took Alfie to see Santa Claus and he asked if he could 'please make mummy better' for his Christmas present," she said. "It was heartbreaking."

After an ultrasound scan revealed gallstones, the conveyancing assistant was referred to Spire Leeds Hospital under the NHS where she underwent minimally invasive surgery to remove the gallbladder. She was able to go home the same day, was back at work within three weeks and is now pain-free.

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**ENJOYING LIFE:** JoJo Louise Hicks with her son Alfie.

## BACKGROUND

### Surgery is highly effective

THIS PROCEDURE does change the lives of most patients, according to consultant hepatobiliary surgeon Professor Giles Toogood.

"For most people this procedure does change their life because they are then able to eat what they like without fear or pain," he said.

The body adapts very quickly after gallbladder removal and is able to function without it, said Professor Toogood.

"The bile, which is made by the liver to assist with digestion of fatty foods, is stored in the bile duct rather than the gallbladder and continues to function the same way after surgery," he added.