Fortis Flt. Lt. Rajan Dhall Hospital, New Delhi :

Indian op to solve weight loss woes

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A lifelong quest to lose her dangerous excess weight is leading one Nelson woman to have bariatric surgery in New Delhi. Naomi Arnold reports.

DRASTIC MEASURES: Michelle Allwright is going to India for stomach surgery to reduce her weight.

This December, Michelle Allwright will be on Dr Randeep Wadhawan's operating table in New Delhi, having more than half her stomach stapled up, cut off, and pulled out through small holes in her skin.

The Richmond woman has had it with diets, points, plans, good intentions, hope, and failure.

The vertical sleeve gastrectomy she will have in India is her only solution now; and once it's done, there is no going back. She will return home just in time for Christmas.

Allwright's grandmother put her on her first diet in the early 1970s, when she was 12. Named The Microdiet, it consisted of milkshakes and powdered soup. "It was disgusting, and I don't imagine any 12-year-old would find that remotely filling," she says. "It was awful. And it just went downhill from there."

SURGEON: Dr Randeep Wadhawan will be operating on Michelle Allwright.

Of English stock originally, Allwright, and countless others of her generation, ate dinner to a backdrop of stories about the Depression and how she must clean her plate at every meal.

"I come from a family of good food, good times, and not in small doses," she says. "I was definitely brought up on too much stodge and dripping.

Dripping sandwiches, for God's sake. I mean, they're yummy, with lots of pepper and things - but. . ."

MODERN BUILDING: The 200-bed Fortis Flt Lt Rajan Dhall Hospital, in Vasant Kunj, New Delhi, where Michelle Allwright will have her procedure.

As she entered her teens she was wearing clothes bearing the same number as her age: size 16 at age 16, size 18 at 18. Today, she weighs nearly 150 kg and wears a size 26. You're morbidly obese if you have a BMI of over 50;