



Justine's now free of spinal pain that has tormented her all her life

Lifelong agony finally abating

A YOUNG Doncaster woman born with a curved spine has fought back after complex surgery put her life at risk when she was in a road accident as a girl.

Justine O'Neil, now aged 20, from Haxey, was eight months old when her parents were told their daughter's spine was curving at an alarming pace because of scoliosis.

Justine had countless appointments with specialists and underwent a significant number of X-rays. Eventually her spine was operated on when she was just six.

She took months to recover from the 10-hour operation, only to learn that she would need repeated surgery each time she had a growth spurt. The painful operations meant missing long spells of school.

Justine's spine was eventually fused solid when she was 12, which should have been an end to a traumatic childhood - but it was the beginning of something far worse.

RUSS NEWTON
News Reporter

At 13, Justine was in a car accident which caused the rods in her back to snap, a severe health risk because any awkward movements could cause the rods to move and pierce her heart or lungs.

Her mum demanded the rods were removed but every surgeon they saw on the NHS refused, saying surgery would be too dangerous.

When her parents searched the internet for alternative treatments, Justine's father discovered Scoliosis SOS, a clinic which has brought relief to hundreds of sufferers.

The clinic said Justine's condition was extremely severe but the family decided to enrol her on a four-week course. By the end of the course she achieved remarkable results.

Not only had she managed to stabilise her condition but



Feeling better: Justine is enjoying life more since her special treatment.

she was free of pain.

Surprisingly Justine has very slightly improved her posture and started to regain her confidence. She has also been able to increase her lung capacity, so she is no longer suffering from shortness of breath or chest infections.

She is delighted and is now waiting for an appointment to see another surgeon.

She hopes he will agree to remove her rods, allowing her to return to playing contact

sports and enjoy her new life as a university student.

"I have been through so much in my life so far. Fitting metal rods in my spine was, in my eyes, the worst decision a medical professional could have ever made.

"I have had years of suffering and feeling like an outcast. I spent so much of my childhood in a hospital bed and now, after all these years, I can finally see the light at the end of the tunnel.

"I achieved so much more than the therapists at the SOS centre expected me to. I think the most important thing for me has been being able to accept myself for who I am.

"Hopefully when I go back to see the surgeon he will agree to take the broken rod out of my back, which will mean that I can be manipulated at the specialist clinic I attended and continue to improve the muscle strength on the weak side of my spine."