

MY KITCHEN RULES' ARTIE

LAP-BAND SURGERY SAVED MY LIFE

The dad of two was forced to take drastic measures to crunch the kilos

There's a lot less of *My Kitchen Rules'* jolly Queensland butcher Artie Vella since he underwent gastric-banding surgery nearly two years ago.

Working long hours in his award-winning Sunshine Coast butchery combined with a love of food saw 1.6m-tall Artie tip the scales at 135kg. And after a string of failed diets, he made the decision to do something about his weight.

'I had tried all the different diets you could but with my job it was hard,' says the 42-year-old, who's now down to 98kg.

'I shouldn't use time as an excuse but when you're working long hours, the last thing that you want to do is go out for a jog.

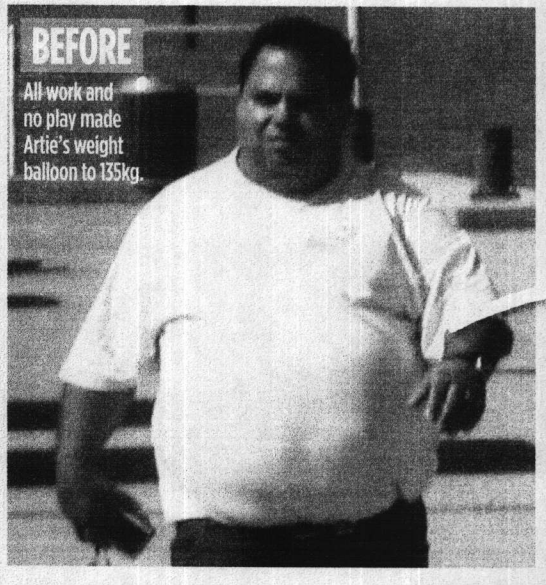
'I did the research and the one thing that really appealed about lap-band surgery was that I didn't have to do a lot of exercise. I've never been the sporty type!'

Another appeal of the controversial surgery was being able to expand or shrink the band when needed. Before filming *MKR*, Artie had his doctor expand it so he could eat 'normally'.

'Because you have to change the way you eat and you have to eat slow, I didn't want everyone waiting for me to finish my meal on national television,' he says.

'I did get my band opened up a little bit. I was basically back to eating like a normal person and I put on weight. As soon as the show was over, I got the band adjusted again and within six weeks, I lost the six kilos I'd put on during filming.'

Artie now hopes to reach 85kg and he's given himself



BEFORE
All work and no play made Artie's weight balloon to 135kg.

Artie lost 37kg



another six months to do it. 'I opted for gradual loss of weight so I could enjoy food and have a couple of glasses of wine,' the father-of-two says. 'The beauty of the lap-band for people who are not motivated or lazy is you don't have to do the exercise!'

While most health experts advise that a balanced diet and exercise should be a big part of any healthy weight

loss plan, Artie is unrepentant about choosing potentially risky surgery.

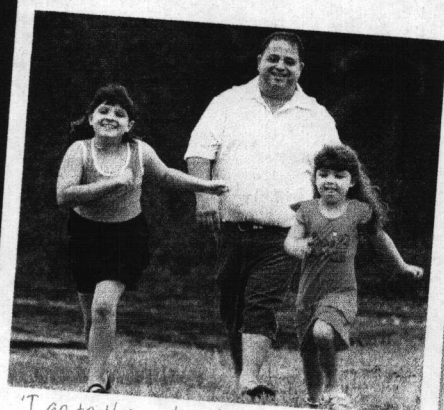
'If I can touch someone who reads this story and they look into doing the same thing, I'll be happy,' he says. **NI**

By Monique Butterworth

• *My Kitchen Rules* screens Mondays to Wednesdays, 7.30pm, on Channel Seven.



The reality TV star shows off a shirt that no longer fits.



'I go to the pool with the kids now and I don't feel embarrassed,' Artie says.

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The beauty of the lap-band is you don't have to exercise!