

A car crash left Karen Farrow in constant agony and popping painkillers like Smarties. Now she's found a natural way to beat the pain

A drink sounds a miraculous cure – surely it can't be that powerful?

I could scarcely believe it either, and when I first tried it I thought it was just another gimmick that might ease my pain for a bit. Over the years I've tried everything from homeopathy to acupuncture and osteopathy. They all helped for a few days but nothing actually cured my back.

And this drink did?

It didn't happen overnight. I started drinking 30ml of aloe vera juice twice a day and after about a week the pain didn't seem as bad. It was very gradual but one day I noticed I wasn't reaching for my painkillers so often. I'd been taking as many as I could and I used to long for the next dosage. The aloe vera juice put a stop to that longing and after three weeks I didn't need any painkillers at all. After six years on them it was a minor miracle!

Has the pain completely disappeared?

Totally. And the feeling is back on my right side for the first time since the car crash. I can walk, sit and stand normally.

How bad was the pain before?

It virtually crippled me – it was constant and sometimes so severe that I'd faint. I found it impossible to get comfortable.

How did the pain start?

I was injured in a car crash in 1991. Doctors said it was whiplash and that I'd feel better in a few days, but the pain got steadily worse. My back and neck hurt, and my right side went numb from the waist down. It turned out I'd damaged my spine but doctors said it was too risky to operate. A disc in my back had slipped out of

I cured my back pain with a DRINK



New lease of life – now Karen can be a proper mum to Hannah and Joseph

place and although I was already in terrible pain, they said there was a chance it could get worse.

How did you cope?

I didn't. I became dependent on painkillers – my body got so used to them I had to take increasingly bigger doses. I had to give up my job as a hairdresser and forget being a proper mum to my little girl Hannah, who's nine now. Fortunately my mum lives near us in Stevenage, Herts, and could look after her. I'm just grateful I'm now well enough to look after Hannah and Joseph, who's three.

Are you still on the aloe vera?

Oh, yes. I have a glass when I get up and one before I go to bed. I get through 1 litre a month (which costs about £16). It tastes foul but it's better than a handful of painkillers and a back that feels as if someone's kicking it.

WHAT THE EXPERTS SAY...

Aloe vera is a natural painkiller, according to Dr Rajendra Sharma, medical director of London's Hale Clinic. "It has painkilling and anti-inflammatory properties as well as trace elements of essential minerals, which will have helped ease Karen's pain," he says. "As aloe vera is taken with lots of water, it can relieve problems associated with dehydration, such as Karen's prolapsed disc."