

'I still have a baby belly but I won't rush to shape up'

Former *Emmerdale* actress Suzanne Shaw opens up to *Closer* about her post-baby body, being a new mum and finding happiness again after her darkest days

It's been 11 years since Suzanne Shaw last had a newborn in the house, and naturally she is besotted with her new arrival.

After finding love with businessman Sam Greenfield, the singer and actress has settled down and the couple welcomed their son Rafferty in October last year.

And Suzanne, 34 – who's also mum to Corey, 11 – is beaming with happiness as she plays with her youngest son on *Closer's* shoot. "Sam and I are so happy and having a baby together has been the best time of our lives," she smiles. "We are so content. Corey is thriving, he's a really happy child and we're over the moon with our little family."

RELAXED APPROACH

Suzanne's happiness goes hand-in-hand with a laid-back approach to her post-baby body. While she gained 3½st – from her usual 8½st to 12st – during her pregnancy with Rafferty, she admits she isn't in a rush to get back into her pre-pregnancy jeans.

"I'm probably the biggest I've ever been at the moment, I'm a size 12 creeping up into a 14, and I'm still in my maternity clothes because I can't fit into my pre-pregnancy wardrobe yet," says 5ft 2 Suzanne, who's dropped 1½st since giving birth. "But I'm certainly not having sleepless nights over it. The only sleepless nights I'm having are down to Raffy waking up for feeds! Having a baby is such a wonderful gift and life is too short

to be worrying about your dress size."

Suzanne – who breastfed for two months and now weighs 10½st – admits that she knew she would gain weight quickly from the very beginning of the pregnancy.

SWEET TOOTH

"I looked pregnant very early on, my hips went bigger and I had a bump, so I knew I'd pile on the pounds," she says. "And while I was eating healthy meals, I was having snacks on top – I have a really sweet tooth and I did indulge. I didn't let the weight gain worry me, though, it's all part of it. After I gave birth to Raffy, my tummy was just like blubber, in fact I've still not shifted my baby belly! I'm not putting pressure on myself to lose weight, though, my priority now is feeding my family nutritious food so I'm sure the excess weight will come off slowly. When I'm ready, I'll start working out with a personal trainer, because exercise puts me in a great frame of mind."

The ex-*Emmerdale* star says Sam, 32, was very supportive as her body changed.

She says: "Sam is brilliant. He thinks

I look wonderful all the time. He would never say anything to make me feel uncomfortable, he's a very positive person anyway and he's been so supportive."

Suzanne went through a difficult time after giving birth to her eldest son aged just 23. Not only did she suffer from postnatal depression, but she went through a tough break-up with Corey's dad, singer Darren Day, just three months after Corey was born.

DIFFICULT TIME

She says: "I was working on *Joseph And The Amazing Technicolour Dreamcoat*, doing nine shows a week, very soon after Corey was born, so I was too busy to eat properly. That combined with the depression and stress meant I lost my appetite, so I never had to worry about my weight after having Corey. But I was constantly concerned about what other people thought of me – I was very much tabloid material so it was difficult."

And while Suzanne – who is now on good terms with Darren – admits she was concerned about getting postnatal depression again, she is determined her fears won't get the better of her.

She says: "Even now I worry it could kick in at any time. I think it will always be with me, but the difference is I won't let it beat me now. Being with someone who thinks you can't do any wrong really helps, and because of that I've relaxed,



Suzanne – here with son Corey – says Sam is very supportive



Seven months pregnant with Raffy



AGE: 34
HEIGHT: 5FT 2
WEIGHT: 10½ST
DRESS SIZE: 12



She says having Raffy is a wonderful gift

and I love myself a little more. I do have days when the dark moments creep in, but I have so much support around me."

Looking to the future, Suzanne, who got engaged to Sam in June 2014, is starting to think about wedding planning.

"I couldn't live without Sam now," she smiles. "It's funny because I'd lived all my life without him and now I think, 'Wow, there was that huge part missing.' We'd love another baby but we're also thinking about getting married first. I think it will be next year and we haven't decided on going abroad or not yet. I'm going to start trying on dresses soon, it's so exciting."

By Annabelle Lee