



house, and most important of all, motherhood.

Mari says her 10-year-old daughter remains her priority. She's never been a fan of handing responsibility over to a nanny.

"I don't want her to grow up feeling in any way unloved or unimportant, but now she's a little older things are a bit easier and I can be more ambitious with work," she adds.

She also has to take care of her own health. Mari was diagnosed with type-one diabetes 30 years ago when she collapsed and was taken into hospital. The only available bed was in an amputation ward and she says it was such a terrifying experience that she vowed there and then to look after herself.

"Actually I've recently discovered that I also have celiac disease (gluten intolerance) so it's salad, salad, salad. But I exercise a lot and I'm very healthy. I'd like to do more to raise awareness of diabetes, particularly among teenage girls. I've been really alarmed by stories about them not taking their insulin because of weight gain. But if you let it slip, you pay for it later."

As she celebrates her 50th birthday, Mari offers ample proof that diabetes is no bar to success in a turbulent business. She's excited about the tour and looking forward to flexing her vocal muscles again. And she's adamant that we aren't about to lose her to Los Angeles.

"I'm not going to move there. I don't know what I'd do career-wise. And LA is quite an odd place, there are good and bad sides. In any case, this tour is about me putting my hand up here at home and saying, 'Remember me?' But it's great to spend time over there in our own house. Isn't it glamorous for a girl from Neasden?"

■ See Mari Wilson at the Marina Theatre, Lowestoft, on October 5th and the Palace Theatre, Southend, on October 30th. [www.mariwilson.co.uk](http://www.mariwilson.co.uk)