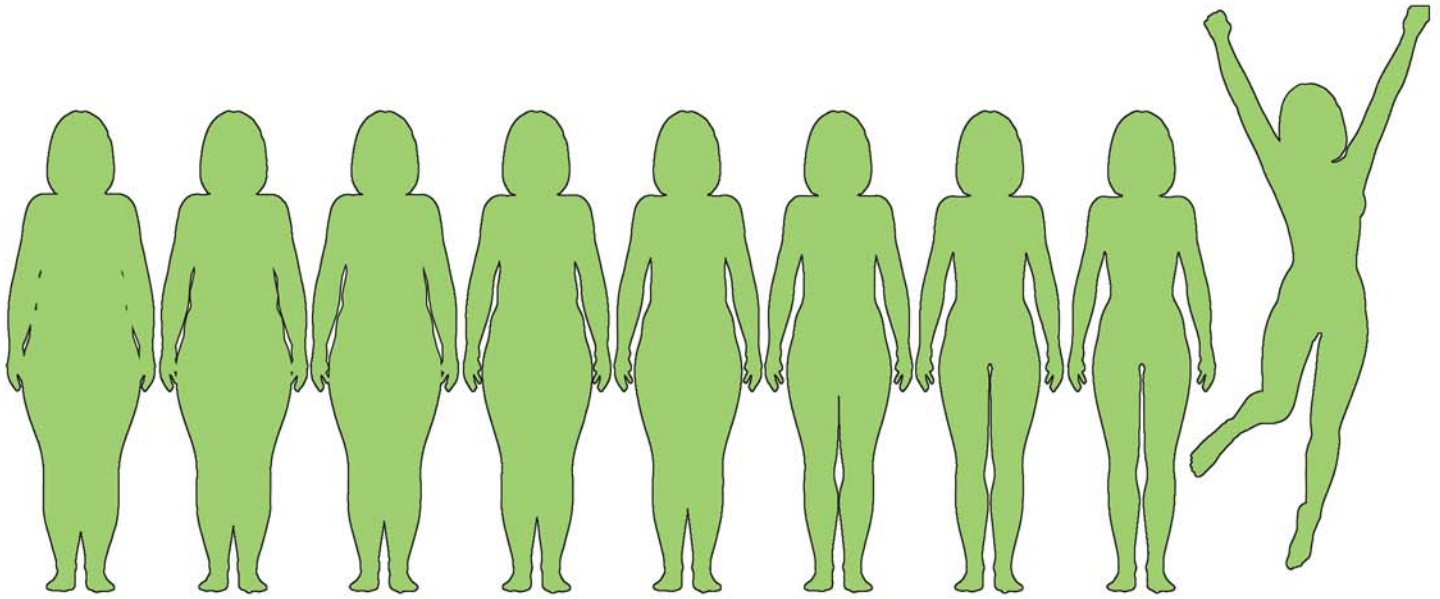




Lap Band Guide

A Guide for Any Gastric Band Surgery Candidate



What is Lap Band Surgery?

Lap Band surgery (also known as gastric banding) is a surgical option for weight loss. Unlike other types of weight loss surgery, Lap Band surgery is flexible, and can be adjusted to suit a patient's nutritional needs and weight loss goals.

The surgery works by placing a silicone band around the stomach, which creates a small pouch in the upper-portion of the stomach. The pouch restricts the amount of food that can be eaten at one time, while also slowing digestion and reducing feelings of hunger.

The Lap Band is adjusted by filling the silicone band with a saline solution, which allows a bariatric surgeon to alter the tightness of the band. These adjustments are made post-op via a port placed in a patient's abdomen, directly under the skin. The band can be adjusted many times over a patient's lifetime as their dietary needs change.

Who Can Perform Lap Band Surgery?

Any doctor who is board certified in general surgery is able to perform gastric banding surgery. However, you will find that most bariatric surgeons specialize in weight loss surgery.

Although not required by law, doctors specializing in weight loss surgery can become accredited by the American Society for Metabolic and Bariatric Surgery (ASMBS). The ASMBS ensures that all doctors are certified by the American Board of Surgery and have performed a minimum of 25 bariatric surgeries in the previous two years.

7 THINGS TO KNOW BEFORE LAP BAND SURGERY

1. Do Your Research

Lap Band is just one of several weight loss surgery options, and it is very different from surgeries such as a gastric bypass, duodenal switch or gastric sleeve. Research how the surgery works and what you can expect, not just post-op but for the rest of your life. Having Lap Band surgery is a big commitment; make sure you're prepared with all the knowledge you need to feel comfortable with your decision.



2. Prepare Yourself Mentally For Surgery

Lap Band is unique among weight loss surgeries -- it is less invasive, and can even be reversed if necessary. This can lead to feelings that gastric banding is not a serious surgery, but it is. The Lap Band is meant to be a permanent solution, supplemented by a strict nutritional regimen and lifestyle changes. It is vital to prepare yourself for these changes, as they are meant to last a lifetime.

3. Start Exercising

Restricting your caloric intake via the Lap Band is only part of the equation; you must also exercise regularly to lose weight and keep the weight off over time. Because you may feel tired or unwell initially after surgery, it is easiest to begin an exercise routine before your surgery. That way, you can start your new lifestyle in stages.



4. Change Your Eating Habits Before Surgery

Living with a gastric band requires a major change to your eating habits. As with exercise, it is easiest to start these lifestyle changes as soon as possible, even before surgery. Any changes you make pre-op will help you ease into your new post-op life. In addition, your doctor may even ask you to lose some weight before surgery, to ensure that you can stick to a healthy diet before surgery.

5. Join a Support Group

Don't overlook the opportunity for pre-op support: Meeting other patients who have already had surgery and can share their experiences will help you ease into your post-op lifestyle. Find a support group in your area or join an online community, such as RealSelf.com, to network with other patients in various stages of pre- and post-Lap Band life.

6. Set Expectations

Having support from your social circle is an important part of Lap Band surgery. Tell your family and friends about your upcoming surgery so they know what to expect ahead of time. Explain how your new diet will work, and arrange to have some help for a few days post-op too.

7. Stock Up on Supplies

Clean out that fridge! Throw away foods that are high in calories or fat and make room for your new post-op foods. You will be on a liquid diet initially, so buy a good supply of broths, protein powders (for making shakes), sugar-free drinks and healthy yogurts. Stock your medicine cabinet with multi-vitamins too; you may need them right after surgery. Your doctor or nutritionist will advise the best supplements to take.

EATING AND DRINKING AFTER LAP BAND SURGERY

Your dietary routine will drastically change with Lap Band surgery, as a means of helping you lose weight. Here's what you can expect to happen:

Pre-Op

Your surgeon will put you on a liquid diet approximately one week before surgery. This will help shrink your liver, which will make your surgery safer. The liquid diet generally includes protein shakes and low-calorie drinks, but each doctor has their own guidelines. Ask your surgeon for his or her specific requirements ahead of time.



Stage 1: Immediately After Surgery

Right after surgery, you will be recovering in the hospital. Although gastric banding is less invasive than other types of weight loss surgery, it is still a major surgery. The doctors and nurses will slowly ease you onto clear liquids. You may only be able to consume small quantities at first, but that is completely normal.

Stage 2: 1-2 Weeks Post-op

You will come out of the hospital with your Lap Band fitted but not too tight. This is an important recovery period from the surgery and allows you to get used to your banded stomach. During this period, you can only consume liquids in small quantities. Start with small sips of water or clear liquids. If you drink too fast, you will feel nauseous and you may even vomit. As your tolerance to liquids builds, you can begin to incorporate other liquids, such as broths, sugar-free Popsicles, juice and decaffeinated beverages.

Stage 3: 3-6 Weeks Post-op

Once your stomach adjusts to liquids, you can move on to soft foods. Your meals should consist primarily of protein; you can have protein shakes, as well as soft or pureed meats, to ensure you're getting enough protein.

Some suggestions:

- Chicken or fish (cooked well, ground or pureed)
- Scrambled egg whites
- Pureed chunky soups
- Mashed potatoes
- Oatmeal, cream of wheat and grits
- Cottage cheese
- Pureed vegetables



The exact length of this dietary stage will depend on your doctor's recommendations, as well as your tolerance for food. Don't rush or try to move on to solid foods too quickly; it is important to allow your stomach time to adapt.

Stage 4

Once you are accustomed to soft foods, you can move onto a solid diet (with your doctor's approval). During this time, your doctor will also plan to fill your band for the first time, so take care to continue with eating small quantities of high protein, low fat foods prior to your first band adjustment.

HOW IS THE LAP BAND FILLED?

During surgery, your doctor will place a small port just below the surface of your skin. This is generally located in your upper abdomen and is attached to your Lap Band by a tube.

Filling your Lap Band is a simple, in-office procedure. The fill port can be located by x-ray, or by feeling for it under the surface of the skin (depending on its depth). Your doctor will locate the port and insert a small, saline-filled needle into the opening. He or she will inject saline into the port, which fills the band. You will not feel much other than the feeling of the needle going into your skin.



During each "fill," your doctor will inject a measured amount of saline. You will then be sent home to monitor your progress. Pay close attention to the amount of food you can eat, your feelings of hunger, and the amount of weight you're losing. Based on this, your doctor will continue to adjust your Lap Band until you are comfortably losing weight and not feeling hungry.



Your Long-Term Success Tools

Listen to Your Body: It can take time to find the right Lap Band adjustment. It is important to be patient and listen to your body. You should tell your doctor if you're feeling hungry, eating too much or too little, or feeling weak (from not eating enough). Based on this information, your doctor can then adjust the Lap Band to a more comfortable fill volume.

Patience is a Virtue: Your first month post-op is a healing period from surgery, and after that it can take up to a year to find the right fill volume for you. You may not lose much weight at first. Don't despair! By making gradual adjustments, you and your doctor will find the optimum fill volume for your Lap Band, which will restrict your diet and help you lose weight at a healthy pace.

Stay Hydrated: Fluids, particularly water, play a vital role in the way your body functions. Strive to drink at least 8 glasses of water every day. You will not be able to drink with meals, or to gulp drinks, so you must try to drink throughout the day as part of your routine.

Avoid Temptation: Your Lap Band will restrict the amount of food you can eat, but you must also take care to only eat healthy, nutrient-rich foods. Junk food or sweets, even in small quantities, will make you feel full but will provide no nutritional benefit. Not only will you feel unwell, but you also will not lose weight.

Follow Up with Your Doctor: Your doctor is an important part of your post-Lap Band life. He or she will closely monitor the performance of your band and make adjustments accordingly. Try not to skip appointments, and always be honest with your doctor about your eating and exercise habits.

Lean on Others for Support: You're not doing this alone. Not only is your doctor and his or her staff a vital part of the process, but everyone in your life can also contribute support and help post-op. Don't be afraid to ask for help. Also, look to support groups (either online or in-person) for valuable post-op recipe advice and nutrition information. Thousands of people have had a Lap Band and know all of the feelings you're experiencing -- let them help you!

Lap Band surgery is a helpful tool for long-term weight loss, but it is also a lifetime commitment that requires patience and discipline to be successful. With time, perseverance and a positive outlook, you'll become comfortable with your post-band diet and lifestyle, which will lead to weight loss and a healthy transition into living life with a gastric band.

Article by: RealSelf

Sources: RealSelf bariatric specialist, Dr. Shawn Garber, MD of New York Bariatric Group

About RealSelf

RealSelf is the largest online community for learning about and sharing information and results for any medical-beauty treatment. Dedicated to helping people make suitable and empowered elective decisions, the site features consumer reviews, Worth It Ratings, real-time pricing information, and thousands of before and after photographs that collectively illustrate the 'real story.' The site also includes safety information and a Q&A with more than 3,500 board-certified doctors so visitors can interact with qualified experts and make safe decisions. RealSelf covers thousands of topics ranging from weight-loss surgery to cosmetic dermatology, plastic surgery, cosmetic dentistry, vision correction and more.

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