Dietary advice following a gastric band

This leaflet is for patients who have had a procedure to place a gastric band for weight loss. It provides advice on reintroducing food and eating well after the procedure. Please see the separate leaflet called Gastric band surgery (LAGB) for pre-procedure advice.

Diet and your gastric band

Having a gastric band placed does not guarantee weight loss. This procedure is a tool that you should work with to maximise and maintain your weight loss. This means you will still need to make changes to your diet and lifestyle. You will also need to upkeep these changes to maintain the weight you have lost.

Red flag symptoms

After your procedure, if you have any of these symptoms, please telephone the ward that you were on for advice, or in an emergency go to the nearest Emergency Department (A&E):

- A persistently high fever
- Sudden shortness of breath, chest pain or a rapid pulse
- Pain, redness or swelling in one or both of your legs
- Difficulty in swallowing that does not settle after changing to clear fluids for a few hours
- Constipation that does not respond to laxatives
- Severe abdominal pain
- Uncontrollable vomiting

If you have other significant medical concerns, you should seek urgent medical advice and explain that you have had a recent gastric band placed.

Reintroducing food

After your procedure, it is essential that you follow the diet reintroduction stages to reduce the risk of complications. It is important to slowly progress through each stage and not rush or skip stages. This allows the band to settle in the correct position, avoiding slippage as well as reducing discomfort and the risk of vomiting. It may take you longer to progress through each stage and this is not a concern, unless you are not progressing at all.

Your diet will progress from fluids to soft foods, through to regular texture foods in 4 stages:

- Stage 1: **Fluids**
- Stage 2: **Pureed diet**
- Stage 3: **Soft / mashable**
- Stage 4: **Regular texture.**

Stage 1: Fluids only

Follow the fluid only diet for 2 weeks.

Immediately after the procedure you will be required to have clear fluids only. This stage should be completed before you leave the hospital. Examples include: water, diluted squash, tea without milk, clear broth, diluted apple juice, ice lollies, ice cubes, and sugar free jelly.

Liquid diet: Your liquid diet must be smooth and of a consistency that could be sucked through a straw, although you should avoid drinking through a straw. It is important that you get a variety of liquids at this stage, including liquid sources of protein.

General advice:

- Drink very slowly, take small sips and try not to gulp.
- Avoid fizzy drinks and avoid drinking through a straw. This can introduce air into your sleeve / pouch and make you feel uncomfortable.
- Have plenty of non-caffeinated drinks, as caffeine has a slightly dehydrating effect.

Examples include:

- Milk (skimmed or semi skimmed)
- Fortified milk (2 tbsp. skimmed milk powder added to 1 pint milk)
- Fruit juice (diluted 50:50 with water)
- Tea
- Smooth broths or creamed soups
- Yoghurt and yoghurt drinks (add milk if too thick)
- Meal replacement drinks, e.g. Slimfast / Meritene / Supermarket own brands

Sample menu plan for liquid diet

Breakfast	Meal replacement drink **or** glass of fortified milk
Mid-morning	1 glass fruit juice **or** tomato juice **or** milk
Lunch	Meal replacement drink **or** glass of fortified milk **or** creamy soup
Mid-afternoon	1 glass fruit juice **or** tomato juice **or** milk
Evening	Meal replacement drink **or** glass of fortified milk **or** creamy soup
Supper	1 glass fruit juice **or** tomato juice or milk

Stage 2: Pureed

Follow the pureed diet for 2 weeks.

Pureed diet: Your pureed diet should be a smooth consistency with no chunks like a yogurt. Start with pureed foods that are runnier, similar to a custard consistency. Over a few days you should build up the thickness of the puree consistency, ensuring the foods are still smooth.

General advice:

- Eat slowly and stop eating once you feel satisfied. Try not feel full as this can cause discomfort and regurgitation of food.
- You may only manage 2 – 3 tablespoons of food at this stage.
- Wait at least 30 minutes before and after meals to have a drink.

You will need a blender, liquidizer or food processor to make your own pureed foods.

When making pureed meals, avoid blending all your food together. Serve items separately on your plate.

If you are struggling to blend a food, cook until it is very soft and add extra liquids.

Examples include:

- Thick creamy soups / rice pudding / custard
- Smooth yoghurts
- Softly cooked and blended vegetables / smooth mashed potato
- Cereals such as Ready Brek / Weetabix / ground rice
- Blended fruits
- Blended meats with gravy or other sauces
- Blended casseroles / soups

Sample menu plan for pureed diet

Breakfast	Smooth very milky Weetabix **or** Ready Brek with milk **or** yoghurt and fruit juice
Mid-morning	Low calorie yoghurt **or** smooth rice pudding
Lunch	Blended creamy soup **or** blended macaroni cheese **or** blended cauliflower cheese
Mid-afternoon	Mashed banana **or** pureed stewed fruit
Evening	Blended chicken casserole **or** blended fish in white sauce, with smooth mashed potato and blended carrots.

Stage 3: Soft / mashable

Follow the soft / mashable diet for 2 weeks.

Soft diet: Your soft diet should be foods that can be easily mashed with a fork. At this stage, you no longer need to blend your foods. Aim to create balanced meals and a regular meal pattern.

General advice:

- Continue to eat slowly, chew well and stop eating when feeling satisfied.
- Have small mouthful sizes of a 20 pence piece, or smaller if you are struggling.
- Wait at least 30 minutes before and after meals to have a drink.

If you are now managing a tea plate-sized portion, you should have 3 meals a day with no snacks in between.

If you are still only managing a few tablespoons of foods, you should continue to have snacks between meals.

Examples include

- Tender meat / minced meat / fish / Quorn or other soya alternatives
- Soft pasta in a cheese or tomato based sauce
- Boiled potatoes / sweet potato / yam
- Soft omelette / scrambled egg
- Fish pie / cottage pie / shepherd's pies
- Soft vegetables / cauliflower cheese
- Slow cooked casseroles / stews / curries

Sample menu plan for soft / mashable diet

Breakfast	Weetabix **or** Ready Brek with milk
Mid-morning	Low calorie yoghurt **or** rice pudding
Lunch	Scrambled egg **or** macaroni cheese **or** cauliflower cheese
Mid afternoon	Banana **or** tinned soft peach **or** pear without skins
Evening	Shepherd's pie **or** fish pie with soft vegetables

Stage 4: Regular texture

Continue with regular texture, healthy eating.

Regular diet: Your regular diet should consist of a regular eating pattern of healthy and nutritious foods. You should not focus on only eating small amounts to lose weight. It is very important that the food you it is of high nutritional value, and you are getting enough protein and fibre in your diet. At six to eight weeks your first band adjustment is usually done and you will start to feel the effect your band is making around the top of your stomach.

General advice:

- You may find it easier to start with crispy / crumbly foods that break down in water, such as crispbreads, crackers and bread sticks. You should then introduce varied textured foods.
- Ensure you are following the **'20-20-20'** approach; have mouthful pieces the size of a 20 pence piece, chew your food 20 times and review your hunger if you are still eating after 20 minutes.
- Aim to have 3 meals a day, limit snacking to only when you are genuinely hungry.
- Take a daily A-Z vitamin and mineral supplement to ensure all your micronutrient requirements are met. The length of time you should take this depends on the quality of your diet and you can discuss this with your dietitian.

Sample menu plan for regular diet

Breakfast	• 1 slice toasted brown bread **or** small toasted bread roll with 1 portion low fat cheese spread **or** 1 egg **or** 50g lean meat • 50g breakfast cereal with semi skimmed milk **or** low fat yogurt • Coffee made with 200ml skimmed milk **or** 200ml vegetable or fruit juice
Lunch	• 50g grilled fish **or** 50g grilled chicken **or** meat alternative with 2 tbsp. cooked vegetables **or** a small mixed salad with 1 tbsp. rice **or** 1 tbsp. mashed potato **or** 1 small boiled potato
Evening meals	• 50g minced meat **or** 50g minced meat alternative in a bolognese sauce with 35g boiled spaghetti plus 1 tsp parmesan cheese and 1 grilled tomato • 1 slice of brown bread toasted with 3 small slices of low fat cheese **or** 1 tbsp. tuna and small salad • Small baked potato with 25g grated cheese and 25g ham with small salad • Chicken casserole made with 50g chicken breast, 35g potatoes and vegetables

For more ideas on meals for after bariatric surgery, consider purchasing the 'Recipes for life' booklet from 'Nutrition & Diet Resources UK'.

Healthy eating

There are five main food groups; a healthy diet includes a mix of them all. You should try to limit sugary foods as these typically increase your calories without increasing your nutrients.

1. Protein foods:

- Such as meat, fish, eggs, dairy, beans and meat alternatives
- Include 2 to 3 portions per day (a portion is 60-90g / 2-3oz)
- You must be particularly careful to chew well when eating meat, fish and nuts
- Base your meals on mostly protein and eat the protein part of your meal first

2. Milk and dairy:

- Choose low-fat cheese
- Choose skimmed milk and low fat yogurt varieties
- Dairy products can also be used as a protein source in your meal

3. Fruit and vegetables:

- Aim to have 4-5 portions per day
- A small glassful of unsweetened fruit or vegetable juice is one portion per day
- Having fruit or vegetables with each meal can also help manage post-surgery constipation
- Having fruit as a snack can help you feel fuller for longer

4. Carbohydrates:

- Such as bread, potatoes, rice, cornmeal and cereals
- One small portion around (50g – 60g / 2oz) at each meal will be sufficient
- There is no need to cut out carbohydrates from your diet

5. Fatty foods:

- Use a small amount of vegetable oil for cooking
- Use low fat margarine as spread

Sugary foods:

- Replace sugary desserts with a diet yoghurt or stewed fruit
- Beware of the soft, calorie dense foods such as chocolate, sweets or ice cream as these will pass through your band quickly and not make you feel satisfied.
- These are also called ‘slider foods’ and can cause weight gain / limit your weight loss

Remember: It is the action of solid food passing through the banded area that makes the gastric band work. When solid food passes through the band, it stimulates the nerves in that part of the stomach. These nerves send a message to your brain to tell you that your hunger is decreasing. You do not get the same action or effect with liquid / sloppy foods or foods that melt, so it is best to limit / avoid these types of foods once you have reached Stage 4.

Caution foods

There are some solid foods, which you may not be able to tolerate after a gastric band placement. However, if you can manage these foods, there is no need to avoid them. Ensure you follow the **'20/20/20' approach** to reduce the risk of issues with these foods. These foods are more likely to make you be sick.

It may be better to introduce these foods slowly:

- Bread, particularly soft bread
- Plain boiled pasta and rice
- Meats that are tough and dry
- Nuts, popcorn
- Pips, seeds, skins and piths from fruit and vegetables
- Stringy fruits and vegetables such as green beans, asparagus, pineapple, rhubarb, oranges, broccoli stalks
- Sweetcorn
- Dried fruits

Fluids / drinks

- Aim for 8-10 glasses (2 litres) of fluid a day.
- Choose non-carbonated fluids. Avoid fizzy drinks, even if they are sugar free. The gas produced by these can expand your pouch and make you uncomfortable.
- Avoid using a straw to drink as this can cause you to swallow more air or drink too much / too quickly at once.
- The best drink for you to choose is water as it is most hydrating while being naturally sugar- and calorie-free.
- You can also have diluted sugar-free squash, sugar-free flavoured still waters, coffee or tea, herbal teas, clear soups, and diluted unsweetened fruit juice.
- Read the labels of your drinks. Some drinks are marketed as healthy but contain a lot of sugar and / or calories.
- Do not forget that alcoholic drinks can be high in calories and increase your appetite, so moderate your intake.

High calorie foods and drinks

To achieve the best amount of weight loss and be able to maintain your weight loss, it is important to try to limit or avoid foods that are high in calories. These can be foods that are high in sugar or fat. This also includes foods classed as 'slider' foods, which are low in protein and fibre, and pass through your pouch too quickly.

- Examples of these foods include:
- Full fat milk, milkshakes
- Sugar squash, fruit juice
- Ice cream, cakes, biscuits
- Sweets, chocolate
- Crisps, chips
- Sugary cereals, sugary cereal bars
- Deep fried foods, oils added to stews
- Creamy soups

Steps to success

- **Limit portion sizes;** for meals use a side plate or serve about half of a regular portion. Measuring your food portions can help initially. It will take time to get used to what your smaller portion looks like.
- **Stop eating as soon as you are no longer hungry;** do not push yourself to feeling full, you are aiming to feel satisfied after eating. Over-eating can limit your weight loss. When you have eaten enough, do not return to finish the rest of your meal
- **Eat slowly;** it should take 20 minutes to finish your meal. This will allow time for your band to tell your brain that you are satisfied and do not need to eat more. Allow a minute between each mouthful that you swallow, placing your knife and fork down between mouthfuls can help achieve this.
- **Chew foods thoroughly;** you should chew each mouthful 20 times before swallowing. Aiming for a smooth texture in the mouth. Each mouthful should be the size of a 20p coin, or smaller if you are struggling.
- **Eat 3 small meals per day;** your meals should be mostly protein based; 50% protein, 25% carbohydrate and 25% vegetables. Eat the protein part of your meal first followed by the vegetables and carbohydrates.
- **Eat nutritious, solid foods;** that contain good fibre and protein to help you feel satisfied after eating. Soft foods that are high in fat and / or sugar are known as ‘slider foods’, these do not make you feel satisfied and can result in weight regain.
- **Do not drink while eating;** do not drink 30 minutes before or 30 minutes after your meal. Drinking before your meal will cause you to feel full before you have had adequate nutrition. Drinking after your meal will ‘flush’ the food through your pouch and band causing you to feel hungry shortly afterwards.
- **Limit snacking between meals;** it is a common cause of reduced weight loss or weight regain. If you are hungry between meals, try to assess if it is genuine hunger or if it is thirst, or emotional hunger.
- **Choose zero calorie drinks**; drinks can easily increase your calorie intake and cause weight regain as they do not make you feel satisfied. You should avoid sugary juice, sugary squashes, milkshakes and fizzy drinks. Women need calcium and this can be obtained from low fat dairy in the diet. Alcohol will also increase your calories and likely cause an increase in appetite.
- **Physical activity;** Increasing physical activity / exercise is beneficial for achieving and maintaining weight loss. A mix of both cardio and weight bearing exercises is the most effective. Make sure that the physical activity you do is within your own safe limits according to your individual abilities.

What to do if food gets stuck

If you have not followed the advice on page 8, including the **'20/20/20 approach'**, you may get a piece of food stuck at your band, which can be quite uncomfortable. Try not to panic as most times it will eventually pass through without needing intervention. To help move the food item along, try taking tiny sips of a hot drink over a period of one hour. If this has not worked, on this occasion a fizzy drink such as sparkling water can encourage your stomach to distend and dislodge the food.

If 24-hours has gone by and you still have food stuck, which is stopping you from being able to eat (or causing food to come back up), you need to attend your local hospital. In this case your band might need to be temporarily deflated in order to ease the problem.

Contacting us

If you have any questions, please contact your dietitian or nurse:

Bariatric Dietitians, Tel: 0118 322 7116 or email: rbb-tr.dietitians@nhs.net

Clinical Nurse Specialist, Tel: 0118 322 8811 / 0134 466 2941

Useful websites

Weight Loss Surgery Information: www.nhs.uk/conditions/weight-loss-surgery/

NHS Better Health: www.nhs.uk/better-health/

Useful books

Living with Bariatric Surgery: Managing your mind and your weight. Author: Denise Ratcliffe. Published 2018.

The Weight Escape: How to Stop Dieting and Start Living. Authors: Ann Bailey, Joseph Ciarrochi and Russ Harris. Published: 2014.

To find out more about our Trust visit www.royalberkshire.nhs.uk

Please ask if you need this information in another language or format.

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