

## Getting the best results from your gastric band

This is the start of your weight loss journey and this guide should help enable you to get good weight loss results with your gastric band. Be prepared though, this is a total lifestyle change and it is not easy. You will not be able to eat the way you did previously. The way you eat will be much slower and it will take some effort and concentration in the beginning. Your portion sizes will also be much smaller and the types of food you eat may also have to change.

The texture of your food choices is very important if you want to achieve successful and sustained weight loss with a gastric band. If you work with your band and consume the right type and textures of foods, then you will feel satisfied with very small meals.

Aim for 3 small tea plate sized meals a day and perhaps a low calorie snack such as a piece of fruit, if the time between your meals is greater than 4 -5 hours.

### Remember:

- Always choose foods with a good texture that need chewing well.
- Avoid liquid or soft foods that require little or no chewing.
- Avoid foods that can melt in your mouth.
- Serve your meals on a tea plate.
- Use smaller knives, forks and spoons to help you take smaller mouthfuls.
- Remember the 'Rule of 20' – each mouthful should be no larger than a 20p piece – chew for 20 times before you swallow – put your knife and fork down and count to 20 before taking your next mouthful – eat 20 mouthfuls over 20 minutes – and then stop. Discard any remaining food on your plate.
- Do not eat and drink at the same time – you can drink up to 10 minutes before a meal and then 10-15 minutes after you have finished.
- If you feel hungry between meals, have a drink first as you may just be thirsty and aim for 2 litres of fluid a day.
- Try and always drink fluids with zero or minimal calories. Some people find fizzy drinks cause trapped wind and discomfort, so try and limit these or pour them into a glass first to lose some of their sparkle.



- Remember the aim is to eat just enough to stop you feeling hungry. You should never eat so much as to feel full or bloated.
- Try and plan your meals and snacks in advance to avoid impulse eating on high calorie foods.
- Try and have protein in at least 2 out of your 3 meals. Protein should fill half of your tea plate. The other half of your plate should be mostly vegetables or salad with a very small portion of starchy carbohydrates.
- The band ONLY works on physical hunger, it does not stop emotional eating or cravings.
- Always try and choose the lowest calorie option.
- ‘Healthy’ is not the same as low calorie e.g. Granola, Muesli, nuts, smoothies are all considered ‘healthy’ but are generally high in calories so should be consumed in very small quantities.
- Most people will experience a weight loss plateau at some stage and whilst it can be frustrating, it is perfectly normal. A plateau can last up to 3-4 weeks. Just keep going and if your plateau continues or your weight starts to increase contact the Bariatric Clinical Nurse Specialist for an appointment or advice 0118 322 8811 or via email at [katharine.hallworth-cook@royalberkshire.nhs.uk](mailto:katharine.hallworth-cook@royalberkshire.nhs.uk) or the Specialist Bariatric Dietitian 0118 322 7116 or via email at [anne.grive@royalberkshire.nhs.uk](mailto:anne.grive@royalberkshire.nhs.uk)
- The band itself does not make you lose weight. The band makes it easier for you to eat less, and it is the calorie reduction that causes the weight loss



### What to eat and drink

- Lean meats including chicken/turkey/beef/pork/ham.
- Fish – fresh, frozen or tinned.
- Pulses, lentils, beans.
- Eggs.
- Vegetarian protein e.g. Quorn or soya based products.
- Vegetables.
- Salads.
- Low fat dairy products e.g. skimmed milk, low fat natural yoghurt, low fat cottage cheese or low fat cheese spread.
- Fruit – fresh, tinned in juice or dried.
- Starchy carbohydrates e.g. potatoes, rice, pasta.
- Low calorie mayonnaise or salad dressings.
- Water.
- Low calorie drinks.
- Sweeteners instead of sugar.



### What to avoid

- Anything with lots of sauce or gravy e.g. cottage pie, bolognaise or casseroles.
- Soft foods e.g. mashed potato, overcooked vegetables.
- Soups.
- Shakes or smoothies.
- Ice cream.
- Chocolate.
- Sweets.
- Cakes.
- Biscuits.
- Fried foods.
- Takeaways or fast foods.
- Pastry.
- Full fat dairy products e.g. whole milk, full fat cheese or full fat yoghurts.
- Full fat mayonnaise or salad dressings.
- Fruit juice.
- Sugar in tea or coffee or on cereal.
- High calorie hot drinks e.g. latte, cappuccino or hot chocolate.

### Problem foods

Everyone has a different list of problem foods but these are the most common:

- Bread – especially soft white bread.
- Pasta.
- Rice.
- Chips.
- Tough or very dry meats.
- Fibrous vegetables or fruit.

### Alternatives

- Try brown bread, toast, pitta, wraps or crackers.
- Try different pasta shapes or cook 'al dente'.
- Try brown or wild rice.
- Choose lean cuts of meat and cook so that they are tender.
- Try peeling some fruits or trying different varieties.

## Possible problems

- Regurgitation or food getting stuck – most often caused by poor eating techniques – mouthful too large or not chewing well enough or eating too quickly – can also be caused by a band that is too tight.
- Pain when eating, either from the band itself or from the port site or in between the shoulder blades – most often caused by food struggling to pass through the band and can be caused by poor eating techniques or a band that is too tight.
- Constipation – ensure you are drinking 2 litres of fluid a day and eating vegetables and fruit to get enough fibre.
- Reflux or heartburn – this can be caused by a band that is too tight or when the pouch above the band becomes stretched. Always seek advice if it persists for more than a couple of days.
- Unpleasant 'eggy' burps – this is usually a sign that food is getting trapped above the band and being digested there rather than in the main part of the stomach. Always seek advice if you start experiencing unpleasant burping.

## Fiction:

- The band works by making the stomach smaller.
- Food is held up above the band then trickles through over several hours.
- You should only be able to eat soft or sloppy foods.
- The tighter the band the more weight you will lose.
- The band should stop you eating.

## Fact:

- The band works by the friction on the nerves at the top of the stomach as food passes through.
- Each mouthful should take about 60 seconds to pass through the band.
- Your diet should consist mostly of solid textured foods that need chewing.
- If your band is too tight, you will gain weight and it can cause the pouch above the band to become stretched and the band to slip. This often leads to the band being completely deflated or removed altogether.
- The band should NEVER stop you eating.

## Other hints and tips:

- If you work with your band you can expect to lose approximately 50% of your excess weight – so if you are 10 stone overweight, you would lose 5 stone.
- You can get greater weight loss than this but it will generally require an increase in your physical activity.
- If you are eating out, try having a starter as a main course or ask if you can choose from the children's menu.
- Always aim to leave something on your plate, no matter how small.

- Keep in regular contact with the Bariatric Team by attending appointments, attending the Support Groups or emailing/telephoning for advice.
- If you ever experience more than one episode of regurgitation or get something stuck, then stick to a liquid only diet for the next 24-48 hours to let any stomach irritation settle. If when you start on solid textures again you are still having problems then contact the Bariatric Clinical Nurse Specialist on 0118 322 8811 or via email at [katharine.hallworth-cook@royalberkshire.nhs.uk](mailto:katharine.hallworth-cook@royalberkshire.nhs.uk)
- Think of your band as a 'friend' who is there to help you, not as a 'policeman' to stop you eating or as an 'enemy' whom you must overcome.
- Band adjustments follow no set pattern after your first fill in X-ray. Some people only need 1 or 2 adjustments to get in the 'Green Zone', other people may need considerably more.
- Everyone has different amounts in their band because everybody's stomach is a slightly different size and shape – try not to get too fixated on the number or compare yourself to others.
- Try and be honest about what you are actually eating both to yourself and when you attend your appointments. We are here to help, not to judge, and the more information we have, the easier it is for us to help you to take control of your weight.
- Use a food diary or Smartphone app such as 'My Fitness Pal' to help you track your food, fluid and activity levels

### Useful websites

British Obesity Surgery Patient Association: [www.bospauk.org](http://www.bospauk.org)

Weight Loss Surgery Information: [www.wlsinfo.org.uk](http://www.wlsinfo.org.uk)

For more information about the Trust, visit our website [www.royalberkshire.nhs.uk](http://www.royalberkshire.nhs.uk)

This document can be made available in other languages and formats upon request.

Centre for Diabetes and Endocrinology

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