

Eating after gastric band

Introduction

The long-term success of your gastric band operation is dependent upon you following the dietary recommendations outlined in this leaflet. You will need to eat a balance diet to make sure your body gets all the nourishment it needs. Many people report that the first few months after surgery are difficult. This is not surprising, as you are recovering from surgery as well as having to change your eating habits. We hope this leaflet will give you some guidance and information to make those changes.

Do's

- Drink plenty of water between meals
- Making changes through better food choices, increasing exercise and getting necessary follow-up care can help you reach your goals.
- Attend the monthly patient support group meetings at Spire Bushey as part of follow-up.
- Stick to liquids for the first 2 weeks
 - Remember, although you feel great, it will take time for your stomach to completely heal! It is very important that you follow the suggested diet plan.
- Eat soft/mushy food during week 3-4
 - Eat slowly! Enjoy your meal; meals should take 20-30 minutes. It takes 20 minutes for the brain to respond, to send you "I'm full" signal.
 - Use a smaller serving plate for your main meals. It makes it look like you have a big meal!
 - Try to eat at regular mealtimes. It is best to have a meal breakfast, lunch and dinner.
 - Snacking is not recommended, but if you find yourself not being able to make it to your next meal, stick to suggested snacks given in the back of this leaflet.
 - Planning meals in advance really helps! Planned meals can keep you on track, especially when you are busy with work and family.

Don'ts

- Do not stray from the liquid diet for the first 2 weeks! Your stomach needs time to heal from the gastric band procedure.
- Do not overeat or drink fizzy drinks – otherwise your stomach will stretch again over time!
- Follow the calorie guidelines.
- Do not eat starchy vegetables such as corn, white potatoes, peas etc. except in small amounts and sparingly.

- Do not drink soft drinks or alcohol (as these are high in calories and will leave you feeling thirsty and tired within a few hours) – diet juices, herbal teas, skimmed or low-fat milk are healthier alternatives.
- Avoid white bread, soft doughy breads, pasta, cream sauces, buttery foods, fast foods, junk food and all fried food – whole wheat tortillas or pita bread, red / white / black beans or steamed vegetables are healthier alternatives.
- Do not use sugar or sweeteners with sugar products such as corn syrup, maltose, fructose etc.

Example of a food and exercise diary:

Date: _____ Sun Mon Tues Wed Thurs Fri Sat

<u>Time</u>	<u>Breakfast</u>	<u>Calories</u>
<u>Time</u>	<u>Lunch</u>	<u>Calories</u>
<u>Time</u>	<u>Dinner</u>	<u>Calories</u>
<u>Time</u>	<u>Misc. / Snack</u>	<u>Calories</u>

6-8 glasses of water (✓ off squares)

Exercise _____ Minutes _____

Step 1: Weeks 1 and 2 – A liquid diet

For the first 2 weeks you will need to take liquids only. Solid food can cause pressure on your stitches and stretch your new stomach pouch. This can lead to vomiting and discomfort. The liquid diet will also give the tissue around your band time to heal.

To ensure an adequate intake of protein, calcium and other nutrients, the liquid diet must be based on **milk**. Ideally low fat milk should be chosen, e.g. semi-skimmed or skimmed.

Suitable fluids

Milk - Aim for at least two pints (1.2L) of milk or a milk alternative a day
Milk can be flavoured with Nesquik or low calorie hot chocolate
Slimming drinks e.g. Slimfast or chemist/supermarket own brand
Complan or Build-up shakes or soups
Yogurt drinks and smoothies
Still mineral water, if taking the flavoured types make sure they are low sugar
Still low-sugar squashes
Smooth soups e.g. cream of tomato or chicken; or oxtail
Tea and coffee without sugar
Unsweetened pure fruit juice

You will need to drink at least 2L of total liquid per day to make sure you do not become dehydrated. You may need even more if the weather is hot.

Take things slowly over the first few days until you establish the amount of liquid that can be tolerated. Over the weeks, you will find that you can take more and drink faster.

Tips

- Start with a couple of sips of fluid and slowly build up the quantity until a sensation of fullness occurs.
- It is important to stop drinking as soon as you feel full.
- If stomach pain or nausea is experienced while drinking, stop until the feeling passes.
- If the quantity of fluid taken is too large the stomach will overfill and vomiting will occur.
- DO NOT drink fizzy drinks at any time after gastric band as the gases cause bloating and will increase your stomach size.

Multivitamins and Minerals

A gastric band reduces the quantity of food you are able to eat at any one meal. Although milk can provide most of the nourishment required, it does not supply all the vitamins and minerals your body needs. Therefore, it is essential that you take a daily multivitamin and mineral supplement, which includes iron, whilst you are not eating a normal diet. Ideally this should be in a liquid or chewable form or a solid tablet can be crushed or broken down into small pieces before being taken. ***You will need to continue crushing or taking a liquid version of these tablets for at least 6 months and, ideally, for life.***

Recommended Multivitamin and minerals:

Chewable versions:

- ***Bassett's Adult Chewable multivitamins with prebiotics & minerals***
- ***Wellkid Smart / Sanatogen A-Z Kids Chewable***
- ***Haliborange Chewable multivitamins***
- Whole tablet - ***Sanatogen Gold*** or ***Centrum*** (after 3 months)

Plus

- ***Chewable Calcium*** – 1000mg calcium /day
- ***Liquid iron or iron drops*** - 50mg of iron/day

Step 2: Weeks 3 and 4 – A soft moist diet

After 2 weeks, gradually start introducing foods with a soft moist texture. Foods should be broken into pieces or mashed with a fork. Some people prefer to blend or puree their foods. This is really up to you but not essential. To start with you can only manage a few mouthfuls at each meal but this will increase. To start with try things such as Weetabix with milk or mashed potato with gravy. Remember to stick to small portions and it helps to eat from a side plate.

Below are suitable foods, to take in small amounts.

	Food suggestions
Cereals	1 Weetabix or 1 sachet of instant oats/Ready Brek with low fat milk
Main courses	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fish in white sauce Minced meat or chicken in tomato sauce Tender meat casseroles or stews Soft pulses with stock/sauce e.g. dhal Soft omelette/scrambled egg Macaroni cheese/cauliflower cheese Fish pie Cottage pie Lasagne/cannelloni Cottage cheese
Vegetables/ Potatoes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mashed potato/jacket potato without the skin Sweet potato Carrot, broccoli, cauliflower, courgette, swede mashed with a fork
Fruit	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Stewed fruit Tinned fruit without syrup (not pineapple) Mashed banana
Puddings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Low calorie yoghurt/ fromage frais Low calorie mousse or custard

Step 3: Week 5 onwards – A protein rich, low calorie diet

It is now safe to gradually start experimenting with different textured solid foods. Although food may not need to be blended, it will still need to be tender and chewed well. You will need to chew each mouthful at least 20 times; until the food feels like a puree in your mouth. See suitable options in the table above.

It is really important to eat 3 meals a day, with suitable small snacks in between, even if you don't feel hungry. Take your time over your meal; it is likely that it will take about 30minutes.

Your portion sizes are now restricted, so your protein intake can fall. It is very important to make sure that you have enough protein in your diet every day. If you do not eat enough, your body will start breaking down your muscles for protein, leaving you feeling very weak. Protein foods are also very good at filling you up for longer. Listed below are good protein sources.

Examples of good sources of protein

Aim for 2 to 3 portions a day from a variety of foods.

Dairy	Skimmed or semi skimmed milk Add skimmed milk powder to milk & sauces Low calorie/diet yogurts, yogurt drinks Low sugar/low fat custard and milky puddings Low fat cheese & cottage cheese
Eggs	Scrambled, omelette, poached
Pulses	Lentils, beans (add them to stews & casseroles)
Meat	Minced meat in gravy or sauce Casserole meats
Fish	Canned oily fish e.g. tuna, sardines, pilchards Soft white fish – try it in sauce
Protein shakes	Build Up soup, Build Up/Complan shakes Slim fast shakes/smoothies/soups

Foods that may be difficult to introduce back into your diet

There are likely to be some foods that you may now have problems introducing back into your diet. The ability to tolerate various foods depends on how well you chew and how you cook and prepare the food. Try a food by eating a very small amount of it, if you can't tolerate it wait a week or so and then try it again.

Foods	Alternatives
Fresh Bread	Toast or crackers
Pasta	Serve in a generous sauce Use small shapes
Rice	Risotto
Certain meats e.g. steak, dry chicken, fried or roast meat, BBQ's	Small pieces/minced meat Marinade/slow cook/stew or casserole
Fibrous vegetables e.g. sweetcorn, celery, raw vegetables, courgette, aubergine	Peel off skins Cook for a long time Cauliflower, broccoli, skinned tomato, beetroot
Fruit e.g. oranges, grapefruit	Peel fruit Puree or stew Tinned fruit in juice e.g. peaches, pears

Snack options

Generally, snacks are not recommended. However, if you feel that you cannot wait until the next meal without eating, then you can choose one of the following:

- 7 whole wheat crackers
- Popcorn, air popped (675g, no butter)
- 1 small orange
- 250ml unsweetened apple sauce
- 1 medium banana
- 225g cups baby carrots
- 125ml plain low-fat yogurt
- 100g low fat cottage cheese

- 15 grapes
- 125 ml skimmed milk
- 2 rice cakes
- Low-fat string cheese
- 100g cooked oatmeal
- 2tbsp hummus + vegetable to dip
- Sugar-free ice lollies

Band Adjustments / Fills

When the band is put in at the operation it does not contain any fluid. It is usual to commence filling it in stages starting at approximately 6 weeks. Before this appointment you may find that you feel hungry between meals and that you are able to take bigger portions than you imagined. Don't panic, once your band is optimally filled, you will feel satisfied with a small meal and experience adequate restriction.

You will find that when the band has been filled, that it is more difficult to eat again. We suggest you stay on liquids only for the day of the band fill and that it may be helpful to return to the soft moist diet again for a few days afterwards, until you are used to the restriction. You will find that when the band has been filled, that it is more difficult to eat certain foods again

To start with you may require a fill every 2-3 weeks until you reach optimum restriction. It is very normal for it to take at least 2 or 3 band fills before successful weight loss is seen. This is why it will take at least 2 years for you to lose your goal amount of weight

Possible problems following a gastric band

Reflux / Choking on food

You may experience reflux or choking on food if you eat quickly, eat a large meal or forget to chew carefully following your gastric band surgery. Occasionally, this may be a result of your band being too tight or if the band has slipped.

Dietary changes that will help

- Eat smaller meals.
- Chew your food well before swallowing.
- Eat slowly.
- Avoid food that produces these symptoms.

Bloating

You may find fizzy drinks after gastric band surgery leave you feeling bloated, so it is best to avoid them. Depending on the calorie content, cutting these out will also help you to lose weight. Eating small mouthful and chewing slowly may help you avoid swallowing air, which in turn may reduce bloating.

Important things to remember following a gastric band

Eat three meals a day

- It is really important to establish regular meal patterns
- This means eating, breakfast, lunch and an evening meal and 2-3 small snacks a day.
- Don't be tempted to miss a meal. Missing meals, leads to snacking on crisps, biscuits and chocolates
- If done regularly the body doesn't get the good nutrition it needs
- Also the weight loss will stop because of the high calories eaten
- Although eating set meals and snacks may feel unusual to you, it is very important and gradually over time it will become more automatic and natural.

Do not drink and eat at the same time

- Drinking fluids with meals may overfill your small gastric pouch, which will lead to vomiting.
- It can also stretch the stomach and "wash" food through too quickly. As a result you will not sense the early signs of fullness and may over eat.
- Avoid drinking at least 30 minutes before and after each meal.
- You will need to drink 8-10 drinks a day in between meals to get enough fluid

Chew food well and eat foods slowly.

- Take your time over your meal; it is likely that it will take about 30minutes.
- It takes this long to ensure you are chewing properly.
- If the food isn't chewed well you may block the outlet of your stomach, which will cause pain, discomfort, nausea and vomiting.
- Explain to others why you must eat slowly so they don't rush you.

Pay attention to your body's signals of fullness.

- As soon as you feel full or you feel pressure in the centre of your abdomen stop eating or drinking.
- If you feel nauseous stop eating. One extra mouthful of food after these early signals could lead to pain, discomfort and vomiting.

If you do experience problems try to think back and identify the cause.

- Have you eaten too fast or not chewed the food well enough?
- Have you eaten too much, taken fluids with the meal or taken fluids too soon before or after the meal?
- Have you eaten foods that are difficult to digest?
- Identifying the cause of your discomfort will help you make the necessary changes the next time you eat.
- Keeping a food diary may help.
- If you experience regular vomiting seek advice from a member of the obesity team or your GP.

Advice on constipation

- It is natural to expect some change in the frequency of your bowel habits
- This is because the quantity of food you are now eating is considerably smaller than before the operation.
- Try to include high fibre foods e.g. Whole-wheat breakfast cereals pulses, whole-wheat crackers, fruit and vegetables
- Constipation can also be a result of poor fluid intake. Make sure you are drinking enough.
It is also important to drink plenty of fluid between meals. Aim for 8-10 cups/glasses a day
- If constipation persists, try taking liquid senna or lactulose or movicol, all of which are available from your local pharmacy.
- If this does not help, talk to your GP, dietician or your surgeon.

Follow the rules of healthy eating

- To help achieve your weight loss goal, keep in mind that your new diet needs to be **low fat, low calorie** and **portion controlled**.
- Although your smaller stomach will limit the amount of food that you can eat, you can still gain weight if you eat high calorie foods frequently.
- Try to use low calorie sweeteners and low fat spreads.

- Limit the amount of sugar and fats you eat.
- Alcohol is best avoided as it is high in calories and stimulates your appetite. Additionally, beer and champagne may stretch your pouch by releasing gas in your stomach.

How much weight will I lose?

Listed below is a rough guide as to much weight you can expect to lose. You will lose the most weight within the first year and after that the weight loss slows down and eventually will stop. Don't worry if your weight loss isn't following this pattern exactly. If you are either losing weight faster or much slower it is best to discuss with your surgeon, clinical nurse specialist or dietitian.

	Per week	Per Month
First 6 months	0.5-1kg	4-8 kg
6-9 months	0.25-0.5kg	1-2kg
9- 1 year	0.25kg	1

Contact details

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