

Hypno-Band post-op diet

(Adapted from BOSPA (British Obesity Surgery Patients Association))

The band will limit how much food your stomach pouch can contain, but you are still 100% in control of what you put in your mouth, so you need to get to grips with a healthy eating plan if you are going to get the best results from your surgery. You can out-eat a band but this does seem pointless when you have put yourself through the major step of having surgery to control your obesity. Liquid calories (e.g. sugary drinks, alcohol) and melting foods such as chocolate and ice-cream are easy to eat with a band but over indulge in them and you will fail to lose the desired weight.

The first six weeks

You are now ready to continue on your long term eating plan. Remember, you are not just eating small amounts to reduce your calorie intake and lose weight, but you are aiming for a healthy nutritious eating plan as well. Each individual differs in the foods they can eat, but there are six golden eating plan rules to follow if you are dedicated to obtaining the greatest benefit from your gastric band:

- **Eat three meals per day** – your new pouch at the top of your stomach empties slowly throughout the day and you should be satisfied eating three meals a day without getting hungry in between meals. Beware of developing 'grazing' eating patterns of small snacks throughout the day.
- **Eat healthy, solid food** – soft food slips down easily and whilst this has the benefit of being less likely to block your stoma, you will likely end up eating more over the course of the day. Many soft foods are also higher in fat or carbohydrates and as a consequence you may be taking more calories than you should and your weight loss will slow down or stop. Choose solid foods without lots of sauce (e.g. small meal of chicken and vegetables) and you will eat less overall and stay full for longer.
- **Eat slowly and stop as soon as you feel full** – Most obese people are used to rushing their meals and as there is a time lag from stretching the wall of your stomach and telling your brain you are full, you need to be careful with this one or risk blockage, pain or vomiting. Take tiny bites (cut meat up to the size of a pencil-top rubber) and chew each piece 10–25 times. At some point you will start to feel a tightness in your chest. Stop eating and if you are hungry again a few minutes later, have a little more.
- **Do not eat between meals** – you should not need to eat between meals because of hunger if you are eating three sensible meals per day.
- **Do not drink at meal times** – Liquids speed up the passage of food through the stoma and ruin the beneficial effect of slow emptying of food from your new stomach pouch. If you have a drink immediately before your meal you may also find that your stomach is still full and you can't eat your meal. So avoid fluids half an hour before your meals, and for one hour afterwards.
- **All drinks should be zero calories** – As liquids do pass through your stoma so easily, calorie laden drinks, including alcohol, will simply add calories to your daily intake. Women need calcium, and this can be obtained from skimmed milk, but avoid juice, fizzy drinks (the gas can also cause considerable pain), squashes and milkshakes.

A healthy diet

There are five main food groups and a healthy diet comprises a mix of them:

- **Protein foods** – such as meat, fish, eggs, beans – include 2–3 60–90g (2–3oz) portions per day. You will have to particularly careful to chew meat, chicken and fish up thoroughly before you swallow – the recommended bite size is the size of a pencil–tip eraser.
- **Milk and dairy** – choose low–fat cheese and limit amount to 30–60g (1–2 oz). Choose skimmed milk and low fat yogurt varieties.
- **Fruit and vegetables** – try to have 4–5 portions per day. A small glassful of unsweetened fruit juice counts as one portion. Salads tend to be easily digested by most people with bands, and vegetables are good and filling as well as nutritious.
- **Carbohydrates** – bread, potatoes and cereals. For most people with properly restricted bands, this group is somewhat harder to digest so you develop an in–built mechanism to reducing your carbohydrate intake! Replace soft bread in your diet with granary or wholemeal, or crisp breads which are more easily digestible. One small portion of 60–90g (2–3oz) at each meal will be fine.
- **Fats and sugary foods** – use a small amount of olive oil for cooking and replace puddings with a low fat yogurt. As mentioned before, beware of the soft calorie–laden foods such as chocolate, sweets or ice cream.

Problem foods

Some foods are not tolerated very well after band placement, or may block the stoma and cause you to vomit. This again is very individual and some foods cause a problem for one band patient, but not the next. Vegetables and fruits that contain stringy fibres are particularly prone to be problematic.

- Asparagus – cut up very small or blend into soup
- Pineapple – juice is ok, fruit may be difficult to digest
- Rhubarb – cut up very small or puree
- Broccoli – the stalks may be problematic
- Dried fruits – will swell inside you and should be avoided
- Oranges – juice ok, flesh may be problematic
- Meat – needs to chopped very small and chewed thoroughly

Foods such as coconut, crisps and soft white bread are sticky and difficult to digest.

Nuts (such as peanuts, almonds, walnuts) and popcorn may also cause obstruction unless they are well chewed to a paste, and are probably best avoided.

For best weight loss

Limit the following foods:

- High calorie drinks (full milk, milkshakes, alcohol, fruit squashes, juice)
- Cakes, biscuits and desserts
- Cereals with added sugar
- Fats and fatty foods – butter, oils, snacks foods (crisps, peanuts), chips
- Creamy soups

Multivitamins after a gastric band

You do not have altered absorption of nutrients so if you are following a healthy diet, you should not become deficient in any vitamins or minerals. You will get most of your calcium requirements if you have three portions of dairy food in your diet each day (one portion = 1/3 pt milk, a matchbox-size piece of cheese or 1 pot yogurt).

In addition, whilst you are losing weight, you might like to take one multivitamin tablet daily – choose one that can be broken up into smaller pieces to swallow so that it does not become stuck in your band stoma. Most major multivitamin brands are suitable but avoid the capsule formulations. Suggestions are: *Centrum Complete A-Z* (still available in the non-chewable tablet format), *Sanatogen Gold A to Z*, *Seven Seas Multibionta* and *Boots Adult Multi-vitamins*.