

Adjustable Gastric Band or LAP-BAND

The word Lap-Band is the abbreviated and trademarked combination of two words (LAP from laparoscopic and BAND from gastric band). The LAP-BAND is made of silicone elastomer band and placed around the upper part of the stomach to create a small stomach pouch, which can hold only a small amount of food. The lower, larger part of the stomach is below the band. The small outlet created by the band connects the two stomach parts. Food will pass through the outlet (“stoma” in medical terms) from the upper stomach pouch to the lower part more slowly, and you will feel full longer.

The band is placed laparoscopically, or with minimally invasive surgery, under general anesthesia. A small tunnel is made behind the top of the stomach. Then the band is pulled around the stomach to form a ring. The band has a locking part which securely holds the band in a circle around the stomach. The band is held in position by the connective tissue around the tunnel and by stitches used to create a tunnel anterior to the stomach.

Beginning 6 weeks after placement of the band, you will go for your first “fill” or “adjustment”. This is when fluid will be placed in your band to further reduce the size of the opening between the two parts of your stomach. The band is connected by a tube to an access port placed beneath the skin during surgery. Saline fluid is placed into the port up to your band to make you eat less, get full sooner and make the full feeling last longer.

You may require several “fills” the first year to get the proper amount of restriction to obtain maximum weight loss. You must commit to coming for “fills” as necessary. This is the key for optimal restriction and good weight loss.

The band is an excellent “tool” to help you lose weight, but you must be very motivated and committed to changing your lifestyle and eating habits. You must control your portion size and exercise to achieve optimal weight loss.

Although the band may be removed, it should be considered as a permanent procedure. Unless you develop a complication the band should not be removed. If the band is removed, you may soon go back to your original weight and you may gain more.

Weight loss with the LAP-BAND is gradual and slower than other types of weight loss surgeries. Typical weight loss is 1-3 pounds a week for the first year. Remember that your main goal is to have a weight loss that prevents, improves or resolves health problems related to your obesity.