Patient Information

University Hospitals Coventry and Warwickshire NHS Trust

Bariatrics

Diet advice for gastric balloon

Only follow this advice with supervision and support from a bariatric dietitian or nurse.

What is a gastric balloon?

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A gastric balloon is a soft silicone balloon that partly fills your stomach. The gastric balloon can help you to feel less hungry and may help you feel fuller more quickly whilst eating a meal.

The gastric balloon will not make you lose weight alone. The balloon will support weight loss alongside a balance diet and lifestyle changes.

As you will be eating smaller portions when the balloon is in place, it is important to prioritise protein, salad, and vegetables. This is because your body needs adequate protein to maintain muscle mass and salad and vegetables will provide fibre, vitamins, and minerals to keep you well.

After the insertion of the balloon

After the procedure, the nursing staff will monitor you. They'll ask you to start having small sips of water.

- Start by drinking some water from a teaspoon - sip the water 1 teaspoon at a time - stop if you feel any pain.
- Slowly increase the amount of water you drink.

After the procedure, you may feel groggy and forgetful. This will soon disappear.

You may feel thirsty and may have a dry mouth. But do not drink quickly or gulp water.

Tell your nurse if you get very thirsty whilst in hospital.

Going home

When the nursing staff are happy you've recovered from the procedure, they'll allow you to go home.

Do not drive for 48 hours after the procedure. Arrange for someone to collect you after the procedure.

Keep sipping little and often at home. If you get thirsty at home, try sucking a low sugar ice lolly or an ice cube.

Supplements

Take a complete A-Z multivitamin and mineral supplement once a day.

Multivitamin and mineral supplements will stop you from developing any nutrient deficiencies.

Supplements available on prescription:

- Forceval A-Z multivitamin and mineral - one a day

Supplements available to buy:

- Tesco, Sainsburys, Asda, Morrisons, Aldi or Wilko A-Z multivitamin and mineral - one a day

Your diet after a gastric balloon insertion

Have a liquid diet from day 1 to 7

The first days after a gastric balloon insertion can be challenging.

As your stomach adjusts to the balloon, you may feel uncomfortable.

You may have:

- nausea
- vomiting
- cramping

These side effects are common and usually don't last long. You'll be prescribed medicine to help manage the common side effects.

You may need to adjust your diet according to your symptoms, for example you may not like the smell of some foods being cooked so may wish to stick to cold alternatives, until the nausea and vomiting have settled.

It may be hard to meet your body's nutritional needs while only consuming fluids. It is important that you focus on adequate hydration from day 1 – 7, aiming for 1.5 litres per day.

Make sure the fluids you drink are completely smooth with no lumps, bits, skins, or solids. The fluids should be thin enough to pass through a straw. But avoid using a straw to drink as they can make it easy to drink too quickly.

Aim for 3 of these products per day:

- protein yoghurt drink (such as Arla Protein, Lindahls Pro+ Kvarg, UFit)
- meal replacement shake (such as Slimfast, Tesco Slim, Complan)
- 1 pint of milk (semi-skimmed, skimmed, or 1%) – drink this over the day
- 250ml homemade smoothie (no bits, pips, or skins) – made with milk or yogurt

Make the rest of the 1.5 litre fluid requirements from these sources:

- water
- low calorie fruit squash
- diluted fruit juice
- weak tea or coffee
- clear soup or broth (use a sieve or strainer to remove any bits)

Replace your meals with:

In the first 3 days after the balloon is inserted, you may need to water the meal replacement shakes and yogurt drinks down to a thinner liquid consistency. This will help your body to adapt to the balloon.

Remember:

- Sit upright for 3 to 4 hours after drinking - if resting, use a recliner rather than lying flat.
- Sip drinks **slowly** - you might find it helpful to carry a sports bottle around with you.
- Sip drinks little and often to stay well hydrated.
- Check the colour of your urine - it should be a pale straw colour.
    - If your urine is dark, you need to drink more fluid.
- Avoid drinking any carbonated/fizzy drinks – these can cause gas and bloating.

Have a pureed diet from day 8 to 14

Your stomach is starting to adapt to the gastric balloon. You might still experience nausea, bloating and stomach cramps but this should be easing off by now. At this stage, you need to gradually move from liquids to pureed foods.

Increase your fluid intake to 2 litres per day.

Introduce puree textured foods into your diet. These will be thicker than foods in the liquid stage but still a smooth texture. Eat 3 small meals per day, with no snacks, with the foods suggested below.

The below foods have a natural pureed texture:

- cottage cheese
- ReadyBrek
- mashed banana
- yogurt (no pips)

You can blend the following foods, so they have a pureed texture:

- stewed or canned fruit in natural juice (no pips)
- cottage cheese
- lentil dahl
- high protein soup made with chicken/meat/beans/lentils
- meat, bean, or lentil casserole
- chilli con carne (beef, turkey or quorn mince)
- macaroni cheese and broccoli
- chicken, potato, and avocado

Follow a soft diet from day 15 to 21

Start to introduce more textured food to your diet at this stage. Remember to only eat 3 meals per day of these foods, do not snack in between.

Choose foods high in protein, vitamins, and minerals so your body gets the nutrients it needs. Use a fork to mash your food before each mouthful. This will ensure each bite is a soft texture.

Some examples include:

- weetabix, porridge – soaked in milk until mushy
- mashed potato, sweet potato, or yam
- well-cooked pasta with a sauce (preferably tomato-based)
- well-cooked rice
- mashed root vegetables (such as carrots and parsnips)
- well cooked vegetables (cooked until soft with no crunch)
- minced or well-stewed chicken, meat or flaked fish with a sauce or gravy
- scrambled egg or omelette
- baked beans
- yoghurt

Avoid:

- any food with a tough skin or pith, such as sausages, tomato, apple, plums, oranges, bacon
- stringy or fibrous vegetables, such as celery, asparagus, sweetcorn, green beans, mushrooms

Have a normal textured diet from day 22

When you can tolerate a soft diet, you can return to a normal textured diet.

If you cannot tolerate a soft diet, do not start a normal textured diet. Contact the bariatric dietitians for advice.

Aim to eat 3 small meals a day. An example of a day's meal plan can be found below.

Breakfast

- High fibre cereal (such as 1 Weetabix or 4 tablespoons of porridge) with 150ml (¼ pint) semi- or skimmed milk

Lunch and dinner

- 100g of lean meat, chicken, fish, lentils, baked beans, or eggs
- ½ slice bread, 1 to 2 tablespoons well-cooked rice, 1 to 2 tablespoons of mashed potato, or 1 to 2 small, boiled potatoes
- 3 tablespoons of vegetables or salad

Snacking between meals should not be necessary.

Fluids

Aim for 2 litres of fluid such as water or sugar-free squash a day.

Weak tea and coffee may also be included; however, these should not be your main source of fluids.

Avoid fizzy drinks. Fizzy drinks can cause a great deal of discomfort with a gastric balloon.

You may not tolerate some foods

Some foods (such as pasta) can stick to the balloon and can cause unpleasant 'burps.' Avoid these foods.

If you experience burps, have a few small sips of a sugar-free fizzy drink. This will help 'rinse off' any sticky food from the balloon after finishing your meal.

If you experience nausea or vomiting after eating, have a meal replacement drink. Do not miss a miss a meal completely.

Contact the bariatric dietitians/nurses for advice if you are vomiting frequently.

Eating techniques and tips

- Sit down for each meal.
- Eat slowly - each meal should take you 20 minutes to eat.
- Have small mouthfuls of food.
- Eat small portions of different healthy and nutritious foods.
- Eat protein and vegetables first.
- Stop eating as soon as you feel satisfied, not when you feel full.
- Wait at least 2 hours after eating before lying down.

Drinking techniques and tips

- Wait 30 minutes after eating to start sipping on fluids.
- Have small sips of fluid.
- Wait 20 to 30 seconds between each sip of fluid.
- Avoid alcohol - alcohol can irritate the stomach.

Physical activity

Aim to do 30 minutes of moderate activity a day, 5 times a week. Moderate activity will raise your heart rate, but you can still talk.

Activity can be included into your daily routine by:

- taking the stairs if you can
- walking instead of driving when you can
- completing household chores

If you find physical activity challenging, start by reducing the amount of time you are sat down.

The bariatric dietitians can help you set achievable and sustainable physical activity goals. These goals will help support your weight management and your overall health and wellbeing.

What if I have any problems at home?

Go to the Surgical Admissions Unit (SAU) now if you have:

- persistent vomiting
- evidence of blue or green dye in your urine, vomit, or faeces
- increasing abdominal distention
- increased pain, not relieved by medicine
- a fever (a temperature higher than 39ºC)
- dehydration
- difficulty passing urine
- a persistent cough or shortness of breath

For medicines, sick notes, and all other problems and queries, contact your GP.

Frequently asked questions

How much weight will I lose?

Losing weight after a gastric balloon depends on you making lifestyle and behavioural changes.

For the first 8 to 12 weeks, your weight loss will be quicker. We'd expect you to lose 0.5 to 1kg a week.

The rate of your weight loss will slow down after this. You may find your weight loss plateaus at around 6 months.

Will I feel the gastric balloon in my stomach?

Often, people feel some discomfort during the first few days.

After that, the primary sensation you will full is a feeling of subtle 'fullness' after eating or drinking. Stop eating or drinking at the first sign of this subtle feeling of 'fullness' in your stomach. Avoid being 'over-full' - this will feel uncomfortable.

Are there side effects or complications with the gastric balloon?

The first week or two can be difficult. Cramping, nausea, and infrequent vomiting are common symptoms.

If you have persistent problems, contact the bariatric dietitians or nurses for advice.

Can I drink alcohol?

Limit your alcohol consumption. The extra calories won't help with weight-loss.

Alcohol consumption in moderation will not affect your gastric balloon. But it may give you heartburn.

What about constipation?

You may be constipated in the first few days after having a gastric balloon inserted. This is because you're eating smaller portions than usual, so you have less fibre in your diet than usual.

To treat and prevent constipation yourself:

- drink 2 litres of fluid per day
- increase your fibre intake if you can
- keep active – this can help you poo more regularly

If you have discomfort, talk to your GP. They may prescribe you laxatives.

If you have constipation despite taking laxatives, please contact the bariatric dietitians or nurses for advice.

The Trust has access to interpreting and translation services. If you need this information in another language or format, please contact 024 7496 6161 and we will do our best to meet your needs.

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