

Patient Information

General Surgery and Specialist Weight Management Services

Information for patients having a gastric balloon insertion



What is a gastric balloon?

A gastric balloon is a soft silicone balloon that sits in the top of your stomach. It limits the amount of food you can eat by making you feel fuller more quickly after eating a small meal. It can lead to weight loss when used alongside a healthy diet. The balloon used at UHCW is the Orbera 365 which can remain in your stomach for a maximum of 12 months.

What does the procedure involve?

The gastric balloon is placed into the stomach through the mouth and food pipe (oesophagus) .You will be given sedation (light anaesthetic) drugs during the procedure.

A thin flexible camera is passed into your stomach (endoscopy) to check the inside of your stomach is healthy and suitable for the placement of the gastric balloon.

The camera is then removed and you will swallow the rolled up balloon at the end of a catheter or small tube. This is the same size as the camera



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and is no more difficult to swallow.

The flexible camera is then reintroduced and the balloon is inflated under direct vision with saline and a blue dye. The whole process takes about 30 minutes and you will be able to go home the same day.

How can I prepare for having a gastric balloon insertion?

You will be asked to attend a group information session at UHCW where you will be given information about the procedure as well as dietary information for after the procedure. You will have the opportunity to ask any questions you may have.

Medication

- About 7 days prior to the procedure you will be started on a medication called a Proton Pump Inhibitor to reduce your stomach acid.
- You will then need to continue on a Proton Pump Inhibitor for the duration that the balloon is in place.
- For the first 3 weeks after the balloon is inserted we will provide you with medications to limit nausea and discomfort.
- We would advise you to take an A-Z multivitamin once per day when you have the balloon in place.

Diabetes or blood thinning medications – please tell us if you are taking any of these medications as you will need to be given special instructions and your dose may need to be changed.

Diet

- You will need to be on a smooth liquid only diet for 2 days prior to the procedure. The types of liquid you can consume include, thin soups, milk, slim fast /complan and yoghurts.
- You should not eat or drink anything for 12 hours immediately prior to the procedure.
- You should also be provided with the leaflet 'Dietary Advice for Patients Following a Gastric Balloon Insertion'.

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- After the procedure we will guide you in a very gradual reintroduction of diet over the first 3 weeks.

What happens on the day of the procedure?

You will attend the endoscopy department or ward where the surgeon and other members of the team will come and talk to you about the procedure and ask you to sign a consent form. The procedure will either take place in the endoscopy department or in the operating theatre.

After the gastric balloon insertion you will remain in the department or ward for at least an hour until the initial effects of the sedation (light anaesthesia) have worn off. This is because the sedation or anaesthetic drugs can make you feel sleepy and forgetful.

The nurses will monitor you and ask you to start having small sips of water from a teaspoon. It is important not to drink too quickly or gulp as you might be sick or experience pain.

You must have an adult to accompany you home and remain with you for at least 24 hours as you may still be sleepy and forgetful from the sedative. You are advised that for 24 hours after the procedure you should NOT drive, consume alcohol, operate machinery or sign important documents.

Discharge home

When you are ready to go home you will be given to take with you:

- anti-sickness medications
- a card to keep with details of the balloon that was inserted
- a leaflet giving post procedure dietary advice

Will I have a follow up appointment?

You will receive via the post details of follow up appointments which will be at approximately:

- 7-10 days by telephone with a Bariatric Nurse
- 4 weeks you will see a Bariatric Nurse in the WISDEM centre outpatient clinic.
- 8 weeks you will have a consultation with a Specialist Dietitian

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- 12 weeks you will see a Bariatric Nurse in the WISDEM centre outpatient clinic.
- 5 months you will have a consultation with a Specialist Dietitian
- 8 months you will have a consultation with a Specialist Dietitian
- 11 months you will have a consultation with a Specialist Dietitian

Are there side effects with the gastric balloon?

There can be some side effects and it normally takes around 3 to 5 days for the worst of the symptoms to resolve, although it can sometimes take longer.

- Cramping, nausea and vomiting are very common in the first 3-5 days following gastric balloon insertion as the stomach is not used to having it in place. You will be given anti sickness medications to take at home. To help with nausea try to move around as this will help with the transit of food from the stomach to the gut. Follow the dietary instructions you are given in the dietary advice leaflet very carefully.
- Heartburn and acid reflux are common and you should continue to take the Proton Pump Inhibitor medication (Omeprazole or Lansoprazole) while you have the balloon in place as this will reduce the production of acid in your stomach.
- Constipation can occur especially in the initial stages as you are eating less than normal and also have less fibre in your diet. Ensure you drink plenty of fluids, increase fibre when possible and keep active. If you experience discomfort you can take laxatives, although we would wish to know if this continues to be a problem
- Bad-smelling belching or burping can be a problem and may be from food getting stuck to the balloon. Try moving around as this helps reduce the likelihood of food getting stuck around the balloon and always chew your food well. Drinking clear fluids or having a small amount of a fizzy drink or sucking on ice cubes can help clear digesting food off the balloon.

Are there any risks or complications associated with having a gastric balloon?

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Whilst most people do not experience any complications there are small risks associated. If any of these complications are suspected you should seek immediate medical attention. Complications can include:

- Bleeding or damage to the oesophagus or stomach during balloon insertion or removal.
- Chest infection may happen if fluid from the stomach refluxes backwards causing it to enter the lungs during gastric balloon insertion or removal but this is extremely rare. This is the reason patients are asked to follow the smooth liquid diet for 2 days prior to the procedure and then to be completely fasted for 12 hours prior to the procedure.
- Rupture of the balloon can occur. The blue dye inside the balloon acts as a “warning system”. If the balloon bursts, the dye is absorbed by the gut and changes your urine (for a short period) to a blue / green colour. This is a sign you must seek immediate medical attention and contact the bariatric team.
- Bowel obstruction or perforation can occur. If the gastric balloon deflates it may slip into the lower stomach or bowel and cause an obstruction. This would give symptoms of severe abdominal pain, vomiting and progressive bloating and you should seek immediate medical attention.
- Acute pancreatitis can occur if the balloon causes an injury to the pancreas. Symptoms may include nausea, vomiting, abdominal or back pain. This is a sign you must seek immediate medical attention.
- Spontaneous hyperinflation of the balloon is caused by the growth of bacteria in the fluid inside the balloon. This would cause abdominal swelling and pain. Rapid release of this fluid into the intestine can cause infection, fever, diarrhoea or abdominal cramps.

Contact details

Bariatric Co-ordinator	Lynn Coleman	02476 966994
Specialist Dietitians		02476 966155
Specialist Nurses	Jenny Abraham	Bleep 2660
	Amy Wride	Bleep 4811
	Zoe Noakes	Bleep 5907

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Out of hours: Ward 22, Surgical Assessment Unit

Telephone: 024 7696 6186

Or attend UHCW Emergency Department.

UHCW Hospital Switch board Tel. 024 7696 4000

The Trust has access to interpreting and translation services. If you need this Information in another language or format please contact 0247 696 6186 and we will do our best to meet your needs.

The Trust operates a smoke free policy.

To give feedback on this leaflet please email feedback@uhcw.nhs.uk

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