

## Your Keys To Success

The band is a tool. It's up to you to make it work properly.

**Well maintained band** The band is inserted in the correct position, but will sometimes move. At each visit your surgeon will ask questions to establish how well the band is working. If there is concern the band may have moved, this will be investigated. Maintaining the band requires attending regular follow up.

**Follow the Eating Rules...**as best you can.

**Exercise** If you have a calorie controlled diet, then exercise will increase your weight loss. But if you exercise and then don't eat well, or reward yourself for exercising with food then you will not lose weight. So exercise if you find it pleasurable and rewarding in itself, and want to feel stronger, look better and lose more weight. If you can't exercise, then do something active that you do enjoy.

**Lifestyle** We all need pleasure and we all need enough time to do the things we enjoy. You need to get your lifestyle in balance so you can find time to have the life you want and eat the way the band requires. Weight loss is a long-term project, it's not very exciting on an every day basis. Food is pleasurable and so it can feel a bit dull having less food. To balance this out you may need to get more pleasure in your life from other sources.

**Head Space in order** You need to understand your own head space, the way you are feeling in general and how that affects your eating. If you find you are a boredom eater, then keep busy, a relax-after-dinner-eater, learn new ways to relax etc. And if you are an emotional eater, you will need to do something about this in order to lose weight.

**Mindful, Accountable and Responsive.** When you eat, think about what you are eating. Honestly add up the amount and types of food you have eaten. And when you find this is not what you know you should have eaten, then respond, make changes to what you are eating. For example, if you find you have 5 milky coffees per day, this is too much and you need to trim it back. The real trick is how to do this. You will find ways to get the band to help you. But if you don't know where you calories are coming from, then you can't reduce them.



## Troubleshooting

**Do you know what to do if something gets stuck?** If something is stuck try sipping a tiny amount of liquid, perhaps carbonated, and keep doing this until something moves. Sometimes a big gulp of water and immediately vomiting can help move things. If it is totally stuck then page Mr Draper on 9371000 to arrange for the band to be loosened and cleared and retightened. Rarely, the food will need to be plucked out under anaesthesia if all else fails.

**Features of a slip and erosion** The band can slip and become ineffective and then requires repositioning or removal. Or it can make it's way into the stomach (erosion) and then it needs to be removed. Usually these take months to develop, but can rarely develop very quickly and then need urgent attention.

The features to look out for are;

- |                              |  |
|------------------------------|--|
| <b>Decreased restriction</b> | <b>Pain when not eating</b>            |
| <b>Increased restriction</b> | <b>Weight regain or excessive loss</b> |
| <b>Variable restriction</b>  | <b>Port infection</b>                  |
| <b>Complete blockage</b>     | <b>Vomiting ( sometimes blood)</b>     |

If you are concerned you might have one of these problems then make an appointment ASAP.

If you have severe pain and cannot drink then page Mr Draper on 93871000.

The information contained in this pamphlet is not comprehensive. Please visit our website or consult with our team for further information.

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# LIVING WITH THE ADJUSTABLE GASTRIC BAND

*Getting the most out of your band*

**Adjustments**  
**The Eating Rules**  
**Your Keys to Success**  
**Troubleshooting**



**MELBOURNE BARIATRICS**  
**PENINSULA**

# LIVING WITH THE ADJUSTABLE GASTRIC BAND

## Getting the most out of your band

### Adjustments Your Keys to Success The Eating Rules Troubleshooting

#### Adjustments

The first adjustment is usually made at your first review appointment 4 to 6 weeks after your surgery.

#### Preparing for an Adjustment

**Nothing to eat** Generally, just try not to have a full stomach when the band is adjusted as this can make it hard to judge if it has been overfilled. But drinking before the adjustment is fine.

**Don't worry** Sometimes patients are really quite anxious about the adjustment. Mainly it is worrying about the needle. It is quite surprising, however, that this needle will not hurt much at all. It is very different to most other needles and the design features make it less painful. It is not pain free, of course.

#### When is an Adjustment needed?

The band is adjusted to the loosest volume that creates the desired effect: **slow eating, small meals, less hunger.**

**The "Goldilocks Rules"** Too tight and the band causes obvious problems like vomiting and being unable to eat comfortably, but more subtle changes occur like preferring soft foods (maladaptive eating). Too loose

and the desired effect is not achieved. To get the tightness right we use the table below as a guide.

Generally speaking if you are following all the eating rules, but are hungry and eating large meals, and are not vomiting, your band needs to be tightened.

#### Doing an Adjustment

This is done in the consulting rooms and usually takes just a few minutes to do, including the discussion about whether to tighten or not. Sometimes it will require X-Ray assistance at another time. The adjustment is done with you in the position you find most comfortable: lying down or standing up.

#### After an Adjustment

You should only have fluids for the rest of the day after each adjustment, then progress through mash and soft foods over the next day or so as tolerated. This is because the stomach has to adjust to the amount of squeezing the band is placing on it, and this takes up to 3 days. After adding fluid to the band you will have a transient decrease in the foods you can tolerate. If this persists, your band may be too tight.

If you find the effect of the band has barely changed or wears off very quickly, it needs to be tightened further and you should make an earlier appointment. If you cannot tolerate solids, you need it loosened soon. If you cannot tolerate liquids or you have pain with swallowing you will need it loosened that day, and need to page Mr Draper on 03 93871000.

#### The Eating Rules

Success with the band relies on you eating according to these rules.

**Chew Well** The oesophagus has to push the food past the band. Well-chewed food is easier to push through and less likely to get stuck. You should be able to eat just about any food, including red meat, if you chew well. Chewing the food until it is a soft paste is required. Don't swallow chunky or long bits of food. Basically this will mean around 20 chews per mouthful. It is especially important to chew the first mouthful really well as this is the one that tends to get stuck.

**Eat Slowly** After each mouthful, put the food down (or the cutlery) and resume about 20 seconds after you have swallowed. It can be hard to remember this when distracted or in a hurry or stressed. But it is really important. Allow some peaceful, quiet time to eat, at least until you are well practiced with eating with the band.

**20 minute Meals** If you are eating slowly and chewing well, and eating a small meal, it should take around 20 minutes. You should feel full at this time. If you have food left over, then just leave it. If not, perhaps the band needs adjusting. Sometimes the fullness will start shortly after 20 minutes, so perhaps wait and see rather than having more food.

**20 20 20** So to summarise the first three rules, they are 20 chews, 20 seconds between swallowing and starting the next mouthful, and 20 minutes upper time limit on the meal.

**Small Plates** The bigger the plate, the more food you will serve and the more you will want. So small plates will help you eat smaller meals. This is amazingly effective, so don't underestimate it. You could try an entrée sized plate or one of the "Portion Perfection" plates to work on this. After a time of doing this the small meal will look right and you will enjoy the smaller meals more.

**Small Food Pieces and mouthfuls** Taking a big mouthful, especially when hungry, means you are more likely to let some food slide down without being chewed properly, and this will get blocked. To avoid this just chew off tiny bits, or eat tiny bits off the end of a fork. Aim for something that will sit on a 10 to 20 cent piece. If you are hungry, the first mouthful will probably be larger than you would otherwise like it to be and this might get stuck. To avoid this you could have a drink of water 10 minutes before the meal, because this will temporarily decrease your hunger.

**Separate Liquids and Solids** Separating these will make eating easier, meals smaller and fullness stronger, so well worth the effort. The idea is to stop drinking at least 10 minutes before you start eating, and then to not drink for about 1 hour after you finish eating. If you eat and drink at the same time, the liquids will go down quickly, but the solid foods slowly. So one of two things will happen. The liquids will wash the solids through and the meal will get bigger. Or the solids will block the rapidly arriving liquids, which will come flying back up. Or a combination of the two. In other words it will be quite chaotic to eat, unpredictable, and can result in vomiting, big meals and poor sense of fullness.

**Textured Nutritious Foods** The more chunky the food, the less processed the food, the stronger your fullness and the less you will eat. Also, choose more nutritious foods to compensate for the fact you are eating so much less food than you used to. For example, a banana straight from the skin will be more nutritious and less calorific and leave you fuller for longer than a banana milkshake.

**Don't Drink Liquid Calories** The band does not stop these calories. So you need to avoid these. Remember that chocolates are liquid calories because by the time they go past the band they have melted.

