Patient information on Gastric Balloons
Gastric Balloon

The gastric balloon programme is a clinically proven way to reduce hunger so that you eat less and lose weight without surgery. It is a short-term solution to kick-start your weight loss and helps you learn the healthy habits to enable you to maintain that success after the treatment so that you will keep on losing weight.

Losing weight lowers the risk of developing medical problems associated with obesity.
For example, high blood pressure, diabetes, arthritis, breathing problems and asthma.

How does it work?
The gastric balloon is a soft, silicone sack that is endoscopically inserted into the stomach and filled with blue coloured sterile saline. With the gastric balloon you will have a feeling of fullness sooner during meals which will enable you to reduce your portion size and eat less which will help you to loose weight. It will stay in place for 6 months while you learn the habits of healthy eating and kick-start your weight loss with the help of our specialist bariatric team.

The gastric balloon will be removed after 6 months, occasionally they can be left in longer but this will be discussed with you prior to insertion.
How much weight can you expect to lose?

Patients can expect to lose 15-40kg, in the first 6 months and with continued commitment further progress could be made.

The amount of weight you are able to lose and keep off after the procedure will depend on the lifestyle changes that you make, such as increasing the amount of exercise you take and eating a healthy diet. It is important to remember that the procedure will not stop you from craving certain foods or eating what you fancy.

What are the risks of a Gastric Balloon?

In general, this is a very safe procedure. However, as it is still a relatively new procedure the long term effects are as yet unknown. Complications are rare but can happen and these are likely to be the following:

- Leakage or actual bursting of the balloon.
- Ulcers (rare)
- A rupture or bleeding in the stomach or windpipe caused by a faulty insertion of the balloon.
- Gastric problems such as reflux, abdominal pain, nausea and vomiting.

Complications that can occur soon after Gastric Balloon Insertion:

Like other weight loss procedures, the balloon is a tool and works best when you use it properly, following a low calorie diet and maintaining close contact with the health professional team during the time the balloon is in place.

Surgeons usually prescribe medication to reduce your stomach acid production whilst the balloon is in place.

Whilst most people do not experience any complications, possibilities to be aware of include:

- Intestinal obstruction by the balloon (which could cause death) when a partially deflated balloon passes into the small bowel. If this occurs, surgical or endoscopic removal would be required. Signs that this may have happened include abdominal pain, nausea, vomiting, bloating and most importantly you will pass blue/green coloured urine as the balloon will have leaked. If this happens you must contact your specialist nurse or consultant straight away. If you don’t manage to speak to them you must attend your nearest hospital for urgent advice.
- Bleeding or perforation could occur as a result of injury during the balloon insertion or removal, requiring surgical correction.

- Gastric discomfort; nausea and vomiting are common for the first few days following balloon placement but rarely continue in the longer term unless the balloon is causing a blockage.

- A feeling of heaviness in the abdomen, abdominal or back pain, gastro–esophageal reflux or indigestion have also been reported.

- A feeling of imbalance similar to sea sickness.

- Dehydration

**Long term complications after Gastric Balloon Insertion**

- As the balloon only stays in situ for 6 months there are no known long term complications.

**How should you prepare for the procedure?**

- Prepare a list of written questions for your surgeon

- Read information on UK patients’ group websites such as BOSPA and Weight Loss info.

- Discuss the procedure with your close friends and family.

- Meet other patients if possible

- Make healthier changes to your lifestyle

**The day of the procedure**

You will be admitted to the endoscopy unit on the day of your procedure. You must not have anything to eat or drink (this includes chewing gum and calorie free mints) from midnight the night before your procedure.

Once your admission is complete you will see your surgeon and a written informed consent will be signed. You will then go to the endoscopy suite where you will be given a numbing throat spray to insert the gastric balloon.

The procedure may be uncomfortable, but is generally painless (only a throat spray as local anaesthetics is required before and during the procedure).
What should you expect after the procedure?

The first few hours after the procedure:

You will be monitored for up to a few hours in the endoscopy recovery room and should be allowed home the same day as long as you have had no serious adverse reactions to the balloon.

You will be able to start drinking water as soon as the numbing throat spray has worn off. You will be given strict dietary advice from our specialist dietitian.

At discharge

You will need to be driven home and have an appropriate adult stay overnight with you.

You will also be prescribed an anti-acid tablet (lansoprazole) to be taken daily for the whole time the balloon is in place. You will be given a supply of anti-sickness medications to take as directed by your surgeon.

Eating and Drinking

You will be given a diet information sheet. In case of doubt you are advised to contact your dietitian. You are advised to drink at least two litres of water per day to avoid dehydration.

Other Activities

You will be able to walk straightaway after the procedure. Try to go for a walk every day, gradually increasing the distance as you feel able. You will probably need one to two days off work depending on how your stomach adjusts to having a foreign object present, as this sometimes causes nausea but this will normally subside in a day or two.

It is advisable to avoid heavy lifting for at least 2 weeks after the procedure; if you are unsure discuss with your surgeon. You may resume sexual activity as soon as you feel comfortable.
Contact details:

Following your procedure if you have any concerns please contact the hospital below where your procedure was undertaken;

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<tr>
<th>Darlington Memorial Hospital</th>
<th>Bariatric Nurse Specialists</th>
<th>Specialist Bariatric Dieticians</th>
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<tr>
<td>01325 380100 and ask for the ward you were discharged from</td>
<td>07826884694 07717715052 (within working hours)</td>
<td>07827858832 (within working hours)</td>
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Further help and information you may find useful

British Obesity Surgery Patient Association (BOSPA)

PO Box 805, Taunton, Somerset TA1 9DH
Tel: 08456 02 04 46 Web: www.bospa.org
Provides support and information to people in the UK considering obesity surgery.

Weight Concern

1-19 Torrington Place, London WC1E 6BT
Tel: 020 7679 1853 (not a helpline) Web: www.weightconcern.org.uk
Weight Concern is a registered charity, set up to tackle the rising problem of obesity. Weight Concern has shown how psychologists, dietitians and exercise specialists working together can help people make lifestyle changes to control their weight.

WLSinfo (Weight Loss Surgery Information and Support)

Wessex House, Upper Market Street, Eastleigh, Hampshire SO50 9FD
Tel: 0151 222 4737 Web: www.wlsinfo.org.uk
A UK charity providing information and support to patients who are considering or have had weight loss surgery.

National Obesity Forum

First Floor, 6a Gordon Road, Nottingham NG2 5LN
Tel: 0115 846 2109 Web: www.nationalobesityforum.org.uk
Website has a section for families and individuals, which offers advice and support about how to adopt a healthier lifestyle.