

## **FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS ABOUT LAP BAND SURGERY**

### **Is Lap Band surgery reversible?**

Technically, lap band surgery is reversible. All system components can be removed from the body and the stomach will generally return to its original form and capacity once the band is removed. *However, it is recommended that patients consider the surgery to be permanent.*

### **How often will I need adjustments?**

The first adjustment is made 3-4 weeks after surgery. During the first year, patients may need 5-6 adjustments. After that, 3-4 adjustments per year are average.

### **Why does the lap band need adjustments?**

The lap band is adjusted until the size of the stomach and the opening to the stomach are optimal for weight loss and food tolerance. Patients that experience hunger, inadequate weight loss or the ability to eat as much as they want need to have their band adjusted.

### **How is the lap band adjusted?**

The skin is cleansed and numbed with a cold spray and a needle is used to access the port. Sterile saline is added or removed and the needle is removed. The adjustment is normally done in the surgeon's office.

### **Will there be dietary restrictions after lap band surgery?**

Lap band surgery is only a tool to be used for weight loss. The procedure is purely restrictive and does not produce any physical consequences from eating the wrong foods. It is therefore necessary that patients use self-discipline when eating. Being limited in the volume you eat does not necessarily mean that you are limited in the calories you are eating. Lap band patients must choose healthy foods if they wish to see permanent weight loss.

### **Can I have an adjustment to have the band opened more to eat more for a special occasion, like a wedding?**

No. Lap bands are never adjusted for someone to eat more voluntarily. Adjustments are for medical reasons only, not for patient desire to eat more without medical justification.

### **What happens if I get pregnant?**

The lap band can be adjusted to allow for greater food intake during pregnancy. After delivery, the lap band can be adjusted to a smaller size for weight loss. Lap band surgery is a good option for women planning to have children in the future.

**Can I drink alcohol after lap band surgery?**

Your body will react differently to alcohol after surgery. Also, if you stick to the food intake required, drinking alcohol will add calories and slow your weight loss.

**Does the government approve lap band surgery?**

The Food and Drug Administration approved the lap band procedure in June 2001.

**How long will I be in the hospital?**

Most patients spend one night in the hospital after lap band surgery.

**How long will I need to take off from work?**

This will depend on your job and its physical requirements, but most patients are ready to return to work in 4-5 days.

**How fast can I expect to lose weight after lap band surgery?**

Lap band patients lose weight in a slow, gradual way. People can generally expect to lose 1-2 pounds a week. One researcher showed a mean excess weight loss of 61% at 12 months, 75% at 24 months, 72% at 36 months and 60% at 48 months. Because lap band surgery is a restrictive procedure and does not involve any malabsorption of nutrients, weight loss is correlated by adherence to the suggested dietary regime. Patients are encouraged to eat a balanced diet and to avoid the problematic eating patterns of their pre-surgery lifestyle.

**Are there any foods that I will have to avoid after lap band surgery?**

Some patients are unable to eat steak, chicken or bread after lap band surgery. These foods, if not adequately chewed, could block the opening to the stomach. Pasta can also be problematic. Patients who wish to eat these foods must take small bites and chew thoroughly.

**Will I be able to eat sweets after lap band surgery?**

The lap band will not stop you from eating sweets. There are no physical consequences from eating high calorie foods after lap band surgery. Eating unhealthy foods post-operatively will limit your weight loss.

**Are there any risks involved in lap band surgery?**

There are risks involved with any surgery, just as there are risks involved with continued excess weight. Band slippage, erosion, and rejection by the body are possible after lap band surgery.

**Will I have excess skin after my weight loss?**

It is difficult to predict which patients will experience excess skin after Bariatric surgery. Factors that influence this include genetics, pre-surgery weight, length of time obesity was experienced, post-op exercise habits and diet and hydration levels. Compression garments are available to hold excess skin and cosmetic surgery is an option, although insurance companies rarely cover it.