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St George's Healthcare **NHS**  
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# Your diet following intra-gastric balloon placement



Created by: Department of Nutrition & Dietetics, St George's  
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## Balanced healthy eating:

Before we start, please keep in mind that you should aim to follow a healthy diet.

This should be your intention before, during and after balloon placement. This will help maximise your weight loss.

Of course most folk already achieve this guidance more or less. Use the following guide to see how your diet compares.

The following picture shows the five food groups, as you can see fats and sugars should be eaten in the smallest amount, whilst fruits, vegetables, breads or other starchy foods should make the bulk of all meals. Proteins and dairy foods should be eaten in moderation.



Further information on weight loss surgery including the gastric balloons can be found at:

[www.bospa.org/](http://www.bospa.org/)



[www.wlsinfo.org.uk/](http://www.wlsinfo.org.uk/)



Information on healthy eating and weight management can be found at:

[www.eatwell.gov.uk/healthydiet](http://www.eatwell.gov.uk/healthydiet)



[www.bhf.org.uk](http://www.bhf.org.uk)



Information on diet and activity for all ages and abilities can be found at:

[www.nhs.uk/change4life](http://www.nhs.uk/change4life)



## General Advice for living with a gastric balloon:

- Eat slowly and always chew your food well.
- Aim for at least three healthy meals of appropriate quantity each day. If you are unable to finish, then have the remainder as a snack later.
- Divide meals into small portions, use a small plate.
- Stop eating if you feel acid reflux (heartburn), wind or bloating. Do not smoke before eating.
- Avoid high calorie snack foods and alcohol —they won't help with your weight loss goals.
- Aim to drink at least one and a half (1500ml) of fluids each day. Avoid drinking and eating at the same time.
- Slowly sip a glass of water after meals as tolerated. This will rinse the balloon, and help prevent unpleasant burps caused by food sticking to the balloon.
- Avoid drinks with too much gas. Strong tea and coffee are also not advised.
- Do not have supper too late in the evening. Avoid lying down shortly after eating and wait at least two hours before going to bed.
- Some discomfort may occur when trying to sleep or lying on your side, this can be expected and can be eased by propping yourself up with pillows.
- Exercise, or at least walk for 15 to 30 minutes or more daily.

## Who is this leaflet for?

This leaflet is for anyone intending to have the intra-gastric balloon placed in their stomach for weight loss.

## What is a gastric balloon?

The gastric balloon is a soft, silicone sack that is placed into the stomach and filled with air and sterile water. The gastric balloon can:

- Guide you with appropriate portion control (how much food you eat)
- Reduce the frequency of eating (how often you eat)



The overall quantity of food will be less and you will stay satisfied for longer. This is helpful for those with a tendency to snack between meals.

## Frequently asked questions

### How much weight will I lose?

You can experience up to 20 kilos or three stone of weight loss, though some people lose none. Your success depends on whether you make the necessary dietary adjustments or how well you apply them.

### Will I be able to feel the gastric balloon in my stomach?

There is often some discomfort during the first few days. After that, the primary sensation is feeling satisfied or full after eating or drinking.

### How long can the balloon remain in my stomach?

Typically the balloon can remain in your stomach for up to six months.

### **Are there side effects or complications with the gastric balloon?**

The first week or two can be difficult. Cramping, nausea and vomiting are common symptoms though generally not harmful. If you have persistent problems then follow the guidance of your doctor or dietitian and be sure to drink plenty of fluids. There are medications available to help ease the discomfort if it persists.

### **Can I drink alcohol?**

Although alcohol consumption in moderation will not affect your gastric balloon, it may cause heartburn, anyway the extra calories won't help with your weight-loss intention!

### **After the gastric balloon**

The experience of adjusting to the balloon is different from person to person. Some find it a lot easier than others; in time the discomfort will settle.

Try to avoid unnecessary physical activity until a week has passed. Once you have become used to the balloon you can then increase your activity levels.

After insertion of the balloon, you should follow the suggested diet plan on the next few pages. Starting with fluids you should gradually build up to soft foods before you return back to normal textured foods.

Be careful to eat and drink slowly as you will become full up much more quickly than before. Understandably you will be unable to tolerate the same quantities of food and drink as before.

### **Vitamin and mineral supplements:**

After balloon placement, you may be advised to take a daily multi-vitamin and mineral supplements. If so you should adopt this habit for the six months that you have the balloon in your stomach. Your doctor will advise you how to take the supplements.

Recommended multivitamin brands include:

- **Supermarkets own multivitamin brands**
- **Forceval (adult)**
- **Centrum 100% complete**
- **Sanatogen Gold A to Z**

### **Constipation:**

Following weight loss surgery constipation can become a problem. Constipation is usually the result of:

- Inadequate fluid intake
- Insufficient fibre in the diet
- Insufficient physical activity

Choose fibre rich foods such as wholegrain bread and cereals:

- Weetabix, Shredded Wheat, Bran Flakes, or porridge
- Fruits and vegetables; aim for five portions daily
- Nuts and pulses.

### **Fluid:**

Aim to drink at least 1500ml or six to eight cups of fluid daily. This includes any fluid such as water, juices, milk, squash and soups. Tea and coffee are also allowed though should not be your main source of fluids. You should avoid drinks with too much gas. Fizzy drinks can cause a great deal of discomfort with a gastric balloon.

### Dinner:

- 60g or 2 ounces of lean meat, chicken, fish, lentils, baked beans or eggs, **plus:**
- 1 slice bread **or** 1-2 tablespoons cooked rice **or** 1-2 tablespoons instant potato **or** 1-2 small boiled potatoes, **plus:**
- 2 tablespoons vegetables or salad
- 1 portion fruit or low fat yoghurt—optional

### Supper:

- Sugar free drink
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### The gastric balloon dietary guidelines:

To adjust well to the gastric balloon you should follow a strict post-operative diet.

- Day 1 to 3 : liquids only
- Day 4 to 10 : soft foods only
- Day 10 and thereafter : normal textured foods

### Day 1 to 3 : Fluids only

For the first three days you should take fluids only, this will help you adjust to the balloon, prevent dehydration and keep your energy levels up. You should avoid solid foods at this stage as they may cause nausea or vomiting.

Shortly after insertion of the balloon you will be instructed to sip water. If that is tolerated you can progress onto **free fluids** such as milk, yoghurt, fruit juices (low sugar) and soups for the next three days.

You should choose nutritious protein containing fluids; soups are ideal and allow good variety . Chunky or lumpy soups can be blended or passed through a sieve until smooth.

To avoid dehydration you should aim for at least eight cups of any fluids daily; this can include soups. The following simple fluids are usually tolerated well:

### Suggested fluids:

- Semi-skimmed milk – aim for about one pint per day
- Yoghurts
- Reduced-sugar or low-calorie squash
- Tea or herbal teas
- Diluted fruit juice – one part juice to one part water
- Coffee — weak coffee is recommended
- Bovril, Oxo, Marmite or a stock cube diluted in hot water
- Powdered packet soups in hot water, clear soups or broth
- Supermarket branded soups: any variety smoothed in a blender will be fine.

## Days 4 to 10 : Soft foods

So far so good, you can now progress to soft foods as tolerated. Aim to have four small meals throughout the day. Don't wait to become hungry, small frequent meals are better than a single large dinner. Use a side plate if needed to help monitor your portion sizes. For the moment avoid hard foods that need a lot of chewing, also avoid heavily seasoned or spicy foods and strong teas or coffee. These foods can cause heartburn. You should also continue drinking semi-skimmed milk, aim for half a pint per day .

### Suggested menu:

#### Breakfast

1 Weetabix or 3 table spoons (tbsp) porridge with semi skimmed or skimmed milk

#### Mid-morning

- 1-2 tbsp low fat yogurt
- 1-2 tbsp soft/blended fruit

#### Lunch

- 1-2 tbsp lean meat/fish/egg blended with gravy or a sauce, and
- 1-2 tbsp mashed potato or well cooked rice, and
- 1-2 tbsp soft/blended vegetable.

#### Mid afternoon

- 1-2 tbsp low fat yogurt, and
- 1-2 tbsp soft/blended fruit

#### Evening meal

- 1-2 tbsp meat/fish/egg blended with gravy or a sauce, and
- 1-2 tbsp mashed potato or well cooked rice, and
- 1-2 tbsp soft/blended vegetable

#### Bedtime

- 1-2 tbsp fromage frais, and
- 1-2 tbsp soft/blended fruit

#### Between meals

- Low calorie drinks such as tea, coffee, Bovril, diluted fruit juice.

## After 10 Days: Return to a normal balanced diet

If you are tolerating soft food and fluids well, then you can return to a **normal textured diet**, though with caution. Note that some foods have a tendency to stick to the balloon and can cause very unpleasant 'burps'. You may find pasta a particular problem. It is generally advisable to sip water shortly after a meal to **rinse** off the balloon.

If you have trouble with persistent nausea or vomiting after eating then it is advisable to return to a liquid or soft diet for a few meals rather than missing a meal completely.

### A suggested meal plan:

#### Breakfast:

- 150ml (half a cup) of unsweetened fruit juice, **plus:**
- High fibre cereal (such as 1 Weetabix **or** 3 tablespoons of porridge) with 150ml (¼ pint) semi or skimmed milk
- **or** 1 slice toast with low fat spread and topping—jam/marmite

#### Mid morning:

- Sugar free drink

#### Lunch:

- 60g (2 ounces) of lean meat, chicken, fish, lentils, baked beans or eggs, **plus:**
- 1 slice bread **or** 1-2 tablespoons of cooked rice **or** 1-2 table-spoons of mashed potato **or** 1-2 small boiled potatoes, plus
- 2 tablespoons vegetables or salad
- Aim to include 1 portion fruit
- Low fat yoghurt or a small glass of semi skimmed milk

#### Mid afternoon:

Sugar free drink