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Introduction

At Malley Surgical Weight Loss Center, we understand how weight can affect fertility and your ability to conceive. In recent years, various studies have established a strong link between weight and infertility in both men and women. Being overweight can disrupt and cause a fluctuation in the body’s hormones, which can lead to major complications with ovulation and sperm production.

After undergoing weight-loss surgery at our clinic, your chances of conceiving will become significantly higher as you continue to shed excess weight. As you transition from being overweight to reaching a normal body weight, your chances of conception and pregnancy will dramatically increase.

By understanding more about the link between weight-loss surgery and fertility, you’ll soon be on the road to becoming healthier and to realizing your dream of starting a family.
A number of studies conducted on infertility show that being overweight can adversely affect hormones in both men and women. Excess body fat can impact the production of hormones that affect ovulation in women and sperm production in men, in turn leading to lower conception rates.

Studies show that women with a body mass index (BMI) over 40 are 43% less likely to experience pregnancies with successful outcomes than women with normal, healthy body weights. Women with a BMI between 35 and 39 are 26% less likely to experience pregnancies with successful outcomes.
THE EFFECTS OF EXCESS WEIGHT IN WOMEN

In women, excess weight can lead to an excessive production of insulin, which can cause irregular ovulation and menstrual cycles and make it difficult to conceive. Weight has also been linked to polycystic ovarian syndrome (PCOS) — a condition associated with irregular menstrual cycles or a complete halt in ovulation. PCOS can cause women to develop cysts in their ovaries as a result of hormone imbalances.

When overweight women do become pregnant, they are at higher risk for miscarriage and other pregnancy complications, including stillbirth, high blood pressure, preeclampsia, and gestational diabetes. However, the more weight women can lose prior to becoming pregnant, the lower their risk of weight-related pregnancy complications.

THE EFFECTS OF EXCESS WEIGHT IN MEN

For men, obesity can lead to erectile dysfunction, a condition that results in difficulty with achieving or maintaining an erection. Additionally, when men carry excess fat, their testosterone becomes converted into estrogen, resulting in decreased sperm count and testicular stimulation.

Overweight men who are able to successfully impregnate women will often produce sperm with abnormal or fragmented DNA, which can also trigger a miscarriage. The safest and healthiest route for men to take before conceiving with their partner is to lose weight. By undergoing weight-loss surgery, men can increase their fertility and help lower the risk for miscarriage and birth defects.
Obesity can equally affect both mother and child during pregnancy. If you become pregnant while significantly overweight, you are putting both you and your unborn child at high risk for major health problems and possible birth defects.

Due to the nature of their diet and lifestyle, severely overweight women commonly lack the nutrients in their diets that fetuses need in order to grow and develop. Also, since excess weight can often trigger type 2 diabetes, some women remain undiagnosed with the disease throughout pregnancy, which can impact the growth and health of the unborn baby.
Possible complications associated with excess weight and pregnancy are:

- Gestational diabetes - This maternal form of diabetes occurs only when women are pregnant, and can put babies at risk for gaining an excessive amount of weight in the womb.

- Preeclampsia - Overweight women are twice as likely to experience high blood pressure and fluid retention as a result of being pregnant, which can trigger premature delivery, stroke, and blood clots.

- Cesarean-section (c-section) delivery - Overweight women usually experience difficulty with vaginal deliveries as a result of weakened muscle tone and strength in the midsection. Additionally, excess fat deposits in the birth canal can often prevent babies from exiting the body naturally, resulting in longer labor. Women who experience c-section deliveries are often at high risk for infection and delayed wound healing.

- Infection - Being overweight can trigger urinary tract infections and postpartum infections in pregnant women, especially if the baby is delivered by c-section.

Additional risks associated with weight and pregnancy are obstructive sleep apnea, overdue pregnancy, labor problems, and pregnancy loss (miscarriage or stillbirth).

In many cases, babies conceived by overweight mothers can form birth defects that are usually left undetected by physicians due to an excess amount of fat that resides on a pregnant woman's abdominal wall. Ultrasound machines and other medical equipment often lack the technology needed to detect birth defects when the mother carries excess fat.

As a result, babies can suffer from neural tube defects such as spina bifida and brain and heart conditions, be born with higher-than-normal body fat (macrosomia), and are at risk for becoming overweight during childhood or later in life.

However, our team at Malley Surgical Weight Loss Center can help you prevent and avoid possible birth complications by working with you on losing most — if not all — of your excess body weight soon after undergoing weight-loss surgery.
Benefits of weight-loss surgery BEFORE PREGNANCY

By making the decision to undergo weight-loss surgery at Malley Surgical Weight Loss Center before becoming pregnant or trying to conceive, you’re already saving you and your unborn baby from adverse and unwanted health risks you could suffer by staying overweight.

At our facility, you’ll learn how to eat and live healthier after weight-loss surgery, which will greatly benefit both you and your unborn baby when you eventually become pregnant.

The benefits of undergoing weight-loss surgery before becoming pregnant are significant. In recent years, up to 75 different case studies have shown that women who undergo weight-loss surgery are far less likely to experience adverse effects during and after pregnancy than women who remain overweight.

After undergoing weight-loss surgery and shedding pounds, both men and women often see hormones return to healthier, normal levels. For women, this leads to regular menstrual cycles and ovulation. For men, sperm count production increases as a result of having higher testosterone levels.

Pregnancy can also be more enjoyable and comfortable for you after weight-loss surgery, especially since you’ll be carrying around less weight and body fat. After Malley Surgical Weight Loss Center has helped you achieve a healthier body weight, you can finally focus on properly taking care of you and your unborn baby without dealing with any of the complications associated with excess weight.
When you decide to undergo weight-loss surgery, it’s important to choose the surgery that poses the fewest risks and complications. Although any type of weight-loss surgery is better than staying severely overweight, most procedures cannot be reversed, and some may cause difficulty with nutritional requirements throughout pregnancy.

Malley Surgical Weight Loss Center wants you to experience the safest and most comfortable pregnancy possible, which is why we offer LAP-BAND weight-loss surgery to our patients.

With the LAP-BAND, you can experience a healthy and safe pregnancy while still limiting the portion sizes you eat. Some malabsorptive weight-loss surgeries, such as gastric bypass surgery, can result in nutritional deficiencies for both mother and baby if diet is not carefully managed. However, restrictive surgeries such as the LAP-BAND only limit the amount of food you can eat, while still allowing for sufficient nutrient intake.
The LAP-BAND also comes with additional benefits for Mothers-to-be.

At any time, the LAP-BAND can be adjusted or deflated completely to accommodate you and your baby’s health during pregnancy. Some women prefer having the LAP-BAND deflated to allow for higher food and nutrient intake throughout pregnancy. Adjusting or deflating the LAP-BAND can also make pregnancy more comfortable, especially if nausea or vomiting occur as a result of morning sickness.

Your LAP-BAND can be adjusted or deflated during any routine visit to our clinic at Malley Surgical Weight Loss Center. During your appointment, one of our surgeons will deflate your band by removing the saline solution via the access port located near your abdominal wall. If you still experience nausea or discomfort after we adjust your LAP-BAND, you can return to our clinic at any time for additional adjustments.
Becoming pregnant after weight-loss surgery

After you undergo LAP-BAND surgery at our clinic, you may be excited and ready to conceive your child, especially if your decision to have weight-loss surgery was influenced by a desire to help improve your fertility. However, it’s important to be aware of the changes your body will experience as a result of the LAP-BAND surgery and give yourself time for the benefits of the surgery to take effect. Our comprehensive post-surgical program will help ensure that you are well informed to make the best decisions for the health of yourself and your unborn baby.

The right time to conceive

Recent studies conducted by experts in the field have shown that LAP-BAND patients should wait at least one year after surgery before becoming pregnant. In the year that follows surgery, you’ll want to focus on becoming healthier and losing as much weight as possible before you attempt to become pregnant. Additionally, the rapid weight loss you’ll be experiencing right after surgery can result in a lot of changes to your body, including the way your body absorbs nutrients. Delaying pregnancy for at least a year will allow your body to regulate itself and grow accustomed to the changes.

During your first year after undergoing LAP-BAND surgery, it’s important for you to use methods of contraception to avoid becoming pregnant while you’re still on the road to weight loss. If you do happen to become pregnant within the first year after undergoing LAP-BAND surgery, we can help you take steps to slow down your weight loss to help make sure that your unborn baby receives enough nutrients.
Nutrition during pregnancy

During your pregnancy, you’ll need to eat foods high in certain nutrients to ensure that both you and your baby are receiving the vitamins needed for a healthy pregnancy. In some cases, you may be required to take additional nutritional supplements, especially if you decide to keep your LAP-BAND inflated throughout pregnancy.

After you undergo LAP-BAND surgery, our nutritionist will provide you with recommendations on the vitamins and supplements you need to stay healthy. However, when you become pregnant, you’ll still need to work with your OB-GYN in terms of establishing a healthy diet for both you and baby. Generally, the vitamins you should take throughout pregnancy are folate, iron, calcium, vitamin B12, protein, and vitamin D; however, the vitamin intake may vary from patient to patient.

Weight gain during pregnancy

When you become pregnant after undergoing LAP-BAND surgery, weight gain is perfectly normal and healthy, and will be vital to your baby’s overall growth and development. The amount of weight you can expect to gain depends mainly on your BMI.

According to the United States Institute of Medicine, women with an average body mass index (BMI) between 18.5 and 24.9 should gain between 25 and 35 pounds during pregnancy. Women who are overweight and have a BMI between 25 and 29.9 should gain only 15 to 25 pounds during pregnancy.

You should never try to lose weight during pregnancy, as this could deprive your baby of important vitamins and nutrients that it needs to properly develop.

After you learn that you’ve become pregnant, notify our team at Malley Surgical Weight Loss Center immediately so we can work with you on making sure your LAP-BAND is comfortable for you throughout your pregnancy. We will be more than happy to make any necessary adjustments to your LAP-BAND as needed throughout your pregnancy.
Post-pregnancy: *What’s next?*

After you give birth, you can return to our clinic to have one of our surgeons inflate your LAP-BAND if you had had it adjusted or deflated during your pregnancy. We will then help you with continuing on with your weight-loss journey, especially if you gained back some weight during your pregnancy.

With the tools provided in our comprehensive patient care program, you’ll soon be back on track to losing weight and establishing a healthier lifestyle that will benefit you and your entire family.

Get started today! Call Malley Surgical Weight Loss Center at (913) 492-2530