WHAT TO EXPECT AFTER LAP-BAND SURGERY
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Choosing to undergo LAP-BAND surgery is a major decision, but as many of our patients have discovered, it’s one of the best choices you can make for weight loss and overall health. At Malley Surgical Weight Loss Center, we understand how overwhelmed you may feel immediately after your surgery and in the months that follow — and that’s why we provide you with long-term care and support every step of the way.

Not only will we work with you to provide guidance on diet and nutrition, but we’ll also show you how to make fitness a part of your daily life and show you how making adjustments to your LAP-BAND can help you customize your weight-loss journey to your specific needs.

In the weeks and months following your LAP-BAND surgery, we’ll schedule follow-up appointments for you to meet with your surgeon and dietician to discuss your weight-loss progress and any other questions or concerns you might have. You’ll also have the opportunity to become an active participant in our aftercare program, in which you can connect with other patients who understand your weight-loss struggles and can help you celebrate your successes at support group meetings, online forums, and more.

Our goal at Malley Surgical Weight Loss Center is to make you feel happy and comfortable with the life-changing decision you’ve made, and to make sure you experience a promising and successful journey to your ideal weight.
Recovering after LAP-BAND surgery

Immediately after you wake up from your LAP-BAND surgery, you’re likely to feel a bit sore and thirsty. To help you feel more comfortable, the hospital staff will provide you with an ice cube or small amount of water following surgery, but you’ll be required to hold off on additional liquid intake until the following day in order to let your stomach heal.

To address any discomfort or pain right after surgery, your surgeon will either prescribe painkillers or recommend some over-the-counter medicines. In most cases, you’ll feel an ache or soreness in the area of your abdomen where your surgeon has placed the access port of your LAP-BAND. Any pain you feel as a result of surgery should dissipate over the following 1 to 2 days.
In the hours immediately following your LAP-BAND surgery, one of the staff members at the surgery center will help you get out of bed and move around to prevent any breathing problems, blood clots, and gas pain, which can be common in LAP-BAND patients after surgery. Your surgeon will also provide you with postoperative instructions and let you know about any signs of potential complications.

Before you return home, a staff member will double-check to make sure your LAP-BAND is positioned properly on your stomach. With the help of an x-ray, our medical team will verify that your stomach outlet is open and that liquids can flow freely through your band. As soon as we know everything is working properly, you will be free to leave and rest in the comfort of your home.

**SURGERY:** 30-45 minutes  
**RECOVERY: TIME:** 4-7 days

Because of the non-invasive nature of the LAP-BAND surgery, the total recovery time after surgery usually takes from one to two weeks. If your job does not require heavy lifting, you can return to work as soon as five days after your procedure. During your recovery period, your surgeon will advise that you relax and refrain from lifting heavy objects. Soon after your procedure, you will begin adjusting to your new lifestyle and over the period of four weeks, you will slowly progress from a clear liquid diet to a solid food diet.
In the weeks following LAP-BAND surgery, you’ll need to follow a post-operative diet that will allow your stomach to heal and grow accustomed to its new changes. The stages of your diet plan post-surgery will include the clear liquid phase, the full liquids phase, the pureed food phase, and the soft foods phase. After you complete these diet phases, you will begin eating solid foods, but in much smaller portions than before the procedure.

Generally, your post-operative diet will last about four weeks, but our team at Malley Surgical Weight Loss Center may recommend that you extend this time period based on your own personal recovery progress.
Days 1 to 2 after surgery: clear liquids phase

For the first 2 days after your LAP-BAND surgery, you’ll be required to drink water and clear liquids only. During this time period, your stomach will be swollen and will have difficulty processing all other types of foods and liquids.

When drinking clear liquids, be sure to sip your drinks slowly. Do not use a straw, which can cause you to swallow air and create some discomfort.

The clear liquids phase of your post-surgery diet can include:

- Water
- Tea (caffeine-free)
- Sugar-free clear juices (apple, pear, cranberry, etc.)
- Clear broth (beef, chicken, vegetable, etc.)
- Sugar-free popsicles
- Clear Jell-O (without chunks of fruit)
- Sugar-free, non-carbonated beverages

Days 3 to 7 after surgery: Full liquids phase

When the swelling in your stomach has gone down a few days after surgery, you’ll be ready to enter the full liquids phase of your post-op diet, which may include denser and non-clear liquids.

Most liquids will be allowed during the full liquids phase, with the exception of soda, beer, milkshakes, and all other drinks that contain caffeine.

The full liquids phase of your post-op diet plan will include all liquids from the clear liquids phase, as well as:

- Shakes and smoothies
- Cream soups (without chunks of food)
- Milk
- Vegetable juice
- Yogurt (without fruit chunks)
- Sugar-free puddings and custards
Days 8 to 15 after surgery: pureed foods phase

After a week of drinking liquids post-surgery, you’ll be ready to enter the pureed foods phase of your post-op diet. During the pureed foods phase, you’ll be allowed to eat a much wider variety of foods, but only if they are mashed or pureed in a blender.

At some point during the pureed foods phase, you may begin to feel comfortable enough to eat large portion sizes in the manner you did before your LAP-BAND surgery. Some patients who experience this feeling may be under the impression that LAP-BAND surgery failed to work. However, this feeling is quite normal and will go away after you revisit our clinic between weeks 4 and 6 after surgery to have your LAP-BAND filled with saline solution.

The pureed foods phase of your post-op diet plan will include all liquids from the clear liquids and full liquids phases, as well as:

- Hot oatmeal
- Yogurt
- Cottage cheese
- Canned fruits and vegetables
- Vegetables that have been steamed or boiled to a soft state
- Noodles
- Tofu
- Scrambled eggs
- Mashed beans (not refried)
- Canned tuna / flaky fish

Avoid consuming all raw fruits and vegetables, all types of bread, and any meats that are difficult to chew. Foods such as these may be hard on your digestive system and may cause you to experience nausea, stomach pain, and other adverse effects.
Days 16-23 after surgery: soft foods phase

Three weeks after LAP-BAND surgery, your surgeon may allow you to transition into the soft foods phase. During the soft foods phase, you’ll be able to eat solid foods, but only if they are tender and thoroughly cooked.

Throughout this phase, you’ll be required to chew your food slowly and thoroughly to make sure your stomach can digest the food with ease. If for some reason you experience nausea or discomfort after eating soft foods, your surgeon may require you to return to the pureed or liquids food phase until your body is completely ready to transition to more solid foods.

Examples of foods you can add to your diet during the soft foods phase are:

- Fresh fruits with soft consistency (bananas, peaches, kiwi — without the skin)
- Lean meats that are ground or finely diced (ground turkey, fish)
- Low-fat cheese
- Rice
- Tender chicken

Although you can eat raw, soft fruits during the soft foods phase, you’ll still be advised not to eat raw vegetables, as these can still disrupt your digestive system. Other foods you should avoid during this time period are tough or processed meats such as sausages, hot dogs, steak, and beef brisket.

You can drink any type of liquids during the soft foods phase with the exception of carbonated drinks and drinks high in sugar content.
Before you go home from surgery, your dietitian will provide you with a full list of foods that are acceptable to eat during each phase, as well as instructions on how to eat these foods. If you happen to eat foods that are not typically allowed during any particular phase, you may experience serious adverse effects that include stomach irritation, nausea, vomiting, and expansion of your stomach pouch.

If you have any questions about your post-op diet at any time, consult our team at Malley Surgical Weight Loss Center immediately so we can address your concerns and put you back on the right track for weight-loss.

When we feel that you are ready to advance to solid foods, we will work with you in making sure you understand the do’s and don’ts of your diet now that you’ve completed your post-op diet plan. Although your stomach may be completely healed, there are still certain eating habits you’ll need to follow indefinitely after LAP-BAND surgery to ensure that you lose weight and stay healthy in the months and years to come.

Other important diet changes after LAP-BAND surgery

The time you spend recovering and healing from your LAP-BAND surgery will be an ideal time for you to also implement and adjust to major lifestyle changes. Having a LAP-BAND means making certain changes not just to how much food you eat, but also how and even when you eat or drink.

Failing to make the recommended changes to your diet after LAP-BAND surgery may affect your ability to lose weight and could have an adverse effect on the overall state of your health. Eating the wrong types of foods can cause discomfort, so it’s important to learn what types of food work best with your band and how to eat them to avoid unpleasant side effects.

During the weeks and months that follow your LAP-BAND surgery, our team at Malley Surgical Weight Loss Center will provide you with the support and information you need to make sure that you know how to use the LAP-BAND for weight loss. Our dietitian will work with you to make recommendations that will allow you to make smart food choices while still enjoying the foods you love.
Recognizing healthy foods

The first step to losing weight after LAP-BAND surgery is being able to recognize foods that will be healthy for you and also vital to weight loss. Our dietitian will advise you on how to eat a diet that contains enough protein and other important nutrients. The majority of your diet will be made up of lean proteins, whole grains, fresh fruits, and vegetables. We may also suggest that you take nutritional supplements to ensure that you receive the vitamins you need to stay healthy.

Eating smaller portion sizes

With the LAP-BAND, you’ll find that you can consume only very small portion sizes during mealtimes. Since the amount of food you eat will always be limited, it’s important to choose healthy foods that will provide you with the energy you need to keep you feeling alert, vibrant, energetic, and healthy throughout the day.

If you happen to eat larger portion sizes, you may experience nausea or vomiting as a result of eating too much. Also, your stomach pouch could stretch over time if you continue to eat large portions, which can negate the effects of the LAP-BAND surgery entirely.

Because of the smaller portion sizes you’ll be consuming, you’ll be required to eat several times throughout the day, instead of just a few large meals. For example, breakfast may only consist of a small bowl of oatmeal with some fruit, and you may be able to eat a small snack later in the morning. Many of our patients like to snack on high-protein foods, such as low-fat cheese or turkey slices, to make sure they are meeting their nutritional requirements.
Recognizing the feeling of fullness

As you become comfortable with consuming smaller portion sizes after surgery, you may also begin to recognize the feeling of being full. Many of the bad eating habits we adopt throughout our lives — such as eating quickly, eating while watching TV, or eating on the run — cause us to eat past the point of fullness. However, after having LAP-BAND surgery, learning to recognize the feeling of fullness is important and will help you avoid discomfort.

The key to avoiding overeating is to chew your food slowly and thoroughly. When you begin to recognize the feeling of being full, you can stop eating immediately.

Drinking liquids between meals

As you lose weight, it’s important for you to drink water and other healthy liquids throughout the day. Not only does fluid intake help you stay hydrated, it is also necessary to rid your body of excess waste and flush out toxins that burning calories creates.

After undergoing LAP-BAND surgery, the best time to drink water and other liquids is either before meals or at least 30 minutes after meals. Avoiding liquids during mealtimes can help you feel full for longer periods of time. Drinking liquids during mealtimes can cause your food to pass through your stomach more quickly, which can often result in overeating.
Foods to avoid with LAP-BAND

Once you’ve moved on to the solid food phase, you will be able to continue eating smaller portions of most of the foods you enjoy now. However, there are some foods that you should avoid, as they can have difficulty passing through your band and into your stomach, and may even end up blocking your stomach opening.

Foods that you should avoid eating after LAP-BAND surgery are:

- Membranes of citrus fruits (oranges, lemons, grapefruit, etc.)
- Skins and seeds of fruits and vegetables
- Stringy vegetables (celery, asparagus, etc.)
- Popcorn
- Nuts
- Peanut butter
- Shrimp
- Pasta
- Bread that is doughy or untoasted
- Greasy, fried foods

Foods high in fat and sugar content should also be avoided at all times, as your body can experience difficulty with digesting high-fat foods. Since your goal is to lose weight, you may find that cutting sugary and fatty foods from your diet completely is the healthiest way to ensure weight loss with the LAP-BAND.
When you undergo LAP-BAND surgery, your surgeon will insert the LAP-BAND either with no saline solution or with just a small amount. This allows your body to take the time it needs to heal properly after surgery without the added discomfort of adjusting to a smaller stomach.
Two to six weeks after your LAP-BAND surgery, one of our surgeons will adjust, or fill, your LAP-BAND, which involves inserting saline solution into the LAP-BAND using the access port under your skin. After your LAP-BAND is filled, you’ll start to experience greater fullness during meals, which will help you lose weight.

After your first LAP-BAND adjustment, our staff at Malley Surgical Weight Loss Center will work with you over the next several weeks to make sure that you begin to recognize the feelings of fullness and start to lose weight. Your band may require several adjustments before you reach the “sweet spot” that restricts your food intake while still allowing you to consume enough nutrients. Some patients may need to have their LAP-BAND adjusted up to 10 times within the first year, so don’t be discouraged if you find yourself needing to make changes until you find a level of restriction that works for you.

If you’re a woman who becomes pregnant, we’ll be more than happy to adjust your LAP-BAND by removing some of its saline solution or by deflating it completely so that you can enjoy a healthy, comfortable pregnancy. Deflating the LAP-BAND during pregnancy allows moms-to-be to eat larger portion sizes to accommodate the growth and development of the unborn baby.

If you experience extreme discomfort after we make an adjustment to your LAP-BAND, or if you experience side effects that include asthma, severe pain, vomiting, night reflux, difficulty with swallowing, and being unable to eat enough food, notify our team at Malley Surgical Weight Loss Center immediately.
Exercise and fitness after surgery

Exercising and staying fit is crucial to the overall success of your weight-loss journey. Not only can exercise and fitness help you lose weight faster, but staying active can give you more energy throughout the day.

At Malley Surgical Weight Loss Center, we’ll work with you to establish an exercise and fitness plan that works best for you based on your weight and your individual goals. We can also help you build habits to make fitness a part of your daily life and to find exercises that are enjoyable and help you stay motivated.

To maximize your weight loss, we recommend performing at least 30 minutes of activity per day, such as biking, walking, or swimming. If exercise is new or intimidating to you — don’t worry! Daily activity doesn’t have to mean hitting the gym. Many of our patients experience excellent results simply by incorporating more activity into their everyday lives. This may mean going for a walk after dinner, taking the stairs instead of the elevator, or parking your car further away from the store.
Possible adverse effects after surgery

Our team at Malley Surgical Weight Loss Center cares about your weight-loss success and safety, and that’s why we’ll work with you to make sure you understand what’s required of you post-surgery, and also how to avoid any of the possible risks associated with LAP-BAND surgery.

To prevent yourself from experiencing any adverse health effects after LAP-BAND surgery, you should focus on eating healthy foods, eating at a slow pace, chewing your food thoroughly, and consuming small portion sizes. Patients who do not comply with these guidelines may experience one or more adverse effects such as nausea, vomiting, regurgitation, difficulty swallowing, gastroesophageal reflux disease, or indigestion.

If you overeat at any given time after undergoing LAP-BAND surgery, your stomach pouch may become stretched and could cause your LAP-BAND to slip out of place. In this case, your surgeon will be required to surgically fix the slippage or remove the LAP-BAND from your stomach altogether.

If at any time after surgery you feel uncharacteristic symptoms or extreme pain and discomfort, notify our team at Malley Surgical Weight Loss Center right away so we can determine the source of the problem and relieve you of any pain.

Remember — patients who follow the advice of their doctor and dietitian are the ones who experience the best results, the safest rate of weight loss, and the most improvements to their quality of life after LAP-BAND surgery!
LAP-BAND support groups

As you take the time to adjust to your new lifestyle after undergoing LAP-BAND surgery, you may want to share your challenges — and your successes — with others who understand what you’re going through. We offer our aftercare program so that patients can connect with others who can sympathize, offer advice, or just lend an ear.

By joining Malley Surgical’s aftercare program, you’ll be able to talk openly about your surgery experience, your new diet, your fitness progress, and any other topics you may want to share regarding the LAP-BAND and your weight-loss journey.
Studies show that patients who attend support groups following LAP-BAND surgery are more successful in their weight-loss journey. Since we started our aftercare program, we’ve seen patients become more motivated and dedicated to reaching their weight-loss goals as a result of connecting with and establishing lasting friendships with other LAP-BAND patients.

All of our patients are welcome to attend — even those who are still considering surgery. The staff at Malley Surgical Weight Loss Center and other members of the aftercare program will be more than happy to answer questions and help you determine if LAP-BAND surgery is right for you.

Conclusion

The LAP-BAND is a highly effective tool for long-term weight loss, but your individual results will largely depend on your commitment to build and maintain healthy habits post-surgery. We’ve developed our comprehensive post-surgical program to give you the tools and support you need during this journey.

Studies have shown that LAP-BAND patients with a body mass index (BMI) of 40 or greater are able to lose an average of 36 percent of their excess weight within 3 years after undergoing surgery. LAP-BAND patients with a BMI between 30 and 40 are able to lose 65 percent of their excess weight within 1 year after surgery.

Regardless of your BMI now, our staff at Malley Surgical Weight Loss Center is dedicated to helping you achieve the results you need to to live a happier and healthier life.

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