

# Intra-gastric balloon procedure



## Information for patients

Sheffield Centre for Weight Loss Surgery





## Introduction

The intra-gastric balloon is designed to help you lose weight. It is a temporary solution to kick-start your weight loss and help you learn healthy ways to maintain your success.

### Is the intra-gastric balloon for me?

The intra-gastric balloon is sometimes used for people who are too obese for other types of weight loss surgery and need to lose some weight before a weight loss operation can be considered.

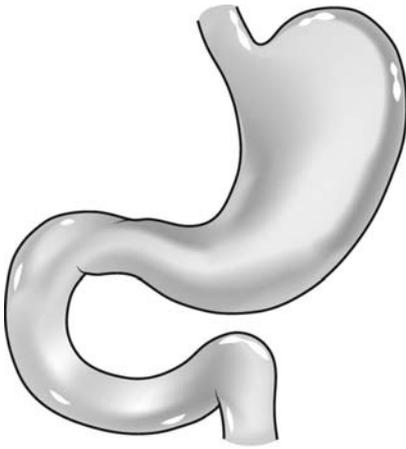
### How is it placed and how does the intra-gastric balloon work?

You may be offered either a local anaesthetic throat spray or light sedation through a cannula in a vein, while you are closely monitored in the endoscopy unit. **If you have sedation you must have someone that can take you home afterwards and stay with you overnight.**

An endoscopy is then performed, which involves passing a thin flexible tube containing a camera into your stomach via your mouth and oesophagus (food pipe).

The intra-gastric balloon is a soft, round, fluid filled balloon lined by silicone to prevent stomach acid from damaging it. Once the balloon is in place it is filled with sterile saline (salty water) and blue dye. The procedure takes approximately 20 minutes to complete.

The intra-gastric balloon helps you lose weight by making you feel fuller more quickly.



**Normal stomach**



**Stomach with the  
balloon in place**

The intra-gastric balloon is a tool for you to work with. If you use it properly i.e. follow a low calorie diet, reduce your portion sizes, adopt a healthier lifestyle and maintain close contact with your health care team, you will lose weight.

## **What diet will I have to follow once I have had the procedure?**

The dietitian/specialist nurse will give you written dietary advice and explain the dietary changes you will need to make to have a successful weight loss.

It may take a few days for your body to get used to the balloon.

For the first 2 days you will be on fluids only.

From day 3 a meal will consist of 2 - 3 tablespoons of pureed foods.

From week 3 - 4, you will then move onto a soft, mushy, crispy diet.

Approximately 8 weeks after your balloon is placed you will be able to eat a normal textured diet (up to a tea plate sized portion).

You should avoid all fizzy drinks, as they can cause heartburn and make you feel bloated.

All fluids will need to be taken 30 minutes before and 30 minutes after meals to avoid vomiting.

You should eat slowly, cut food up into small pieces and chew well.

Avoid snacking in between meals as this will slow your weight loss and possibly increase your appetite. Stop eating as soon as you feel full, otherwise you may be sick.

You will be advised to eat 3 regularly spaced, tea plate sized portions of textured food 3 times per day.

## **What are the benefits of having an intra-gastric balloon?**

This procedure helps you to achieve short term weight loss. It also helps to reduce health related problems:

- Type 2 diabetes
- Osteoarthritis
- Hypertension (high blood pressure)
- Coronary heart disease
- High cholesterol level

## What are the side effects and complications associated with having an intra-gastric balloon?

Whilst most people do not experience any complications, there are several side effects and complications associated with the procedure:

- Sore throat: a temporary sore throat from the procedure should wear off in 24 hours.
- Acid reflux and indigestion: you will be prescribed medication to reduce the production of stomach acid whilst the balloon is in place.
- Bleeding or perforation rarely occurs as a result of injury during insertion or removal of the balloon, this may require surgical correction.
- Nausea and vomiting are common for the first few days following balloon placement, but rarely continue for long. In a small number of cases, patients may not be able to tolerate the balloon for the full six month period, and when this happens it will be removed.
- Abdominal pain and cramps: initially, the balloon can irritate the muscle of the stomach wall causing griping pains but this should settle over the first few days, ensuring you follow the dietary advice will help.
- Rupture of the balloon: if it deflates spontaneously it can cause intestinal obstruction (when a partially deflated balloon passes into the bowel). **If your urine turns green (caused by the blue dye) and/or you experience severe abdominal pain, vomiting and bloating you should seek immediate medical attention** as surgical or endoscopic removal would be required.

The chance of these risks occurring is small, but it is important that you are aware of them before agreeing to the procedure.

There is always the option of not receiving treatment at all. The consequences of not receiving any treatment are:

- Further weight gain
- Shortened life span
- Increase in obesity related diseases (as listed under the benefits above)
- Low self-esteem / depression

If you would like more information please speak to your consultant or the dietitian / nurse looking after you.

If you would like more information on counselling or weight management programmes please speak to your GP.

## **What happens on admission to hospital?**

You will book in at endoscopy reception and be seen by an endoscopy nurse who will take your blood pressure, temperature, pulse and oxygen levels. You will be asked questions about your medical history and any medications that you may be prescribed. The procedure will be explained to you and the doctor will ask you to sign a consent form. Your throat will be sprayed to reduce sensation.

## **Will I be asleep?**

A cannula (a thin tube through which fluids can be given) will be inserted into one of your veins. You will then be taken into the procedure room where you may be given some sedation to help you relax whilst the procedure takes place.

## **What should I expect after the procedure?**

If you have sedation, you may feel sleepy for a while after the procedure and may be given oxygen via two little prongs in your nose until you are fully awake. The nursing staff will check your pulse, blood pressure, temperature and breathing. You may experience a sore throat as a result of the endoscopic equipment.

## **Will I feel sick?**

Many people feel very sick and do vomit after the procedure and for some time afterwards. You will be prescribed anti-emetics, which are drugs to help relieve the nausea and vomiting. The sickness should settle once your stomach has become used to the presence of the balloon.

## **Will I be in pain?**

You may have a feeling of heaviness in your abdomen and experience discomfort in your abdomen / back.

## **Will I be able to get out of bed after the procedure?**

You will be encouraged to get up and move around as soon as possible after the procedure. This is to reduce your risk of developing a blood clot.

## **When will I be able to go home?**

You will usually be able to go home the same day of your procedure. Occasionally some people need to stay in hospital overnight.

## **Will I need any different medication?**

Yes, you will be prescribed:

- anti sickness tablets
- acid reducing drugs to help with reflux and indigestion.
- painkillers to reduce spasms in your gut.

## **Will I have to come back to hospital?**

Yes. You will be sent an appointment to see the dietitian / specialist nurse in the outpatient department, approximately 4 weeks after your procedure. You will then be seen regularly whilst your balloon is in place.

## **Is there any additional support?**

You will have the contact number for the dietitian / specialist nurse who you can call with any queries or concerns.

## **Who will be looking after me?**

A team of bariatric surgery specialists including a consultant surgeon, specialist nurse, specialist dietitian and radiologist

## **When and how is the balloon removed?**

The balloon is removed via endoscopy, no longer than 6 months after placement. The removal is carried out as a day case. You should be fasted for 12 hours before removal. The procedure involves passing the endoscope into the stomach, puncturing the balloon, evacuating the contents of the balloon and then removing the outer casing with the endoscope. This may be carried out under light sedation or just local anaesthetic throat spray.

## Useful contacts

Medical secretary to consultant surgeon Tel: **0114 305 2411**

Nurse Specialist Tel: **0114 226 9083**

Specialist Dietitian Tel: **0114 226 9083**

Northern General Hospital Tel: **0114 243 4343**

## Useful websites for further information:

- **[www.wlsinfo.org.uk](http://www.wlsinfo.org.uk)** (Weight Loss Surgery Information and Support)
- **[www.british-obesity-surgery.org](http://www.british-obesity-surgery.org)** (British Obesity and Metabolic Surgery Society)



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