

Obalon Gastric Balloon

What is an Obalon Gastric Balloon?

An Obalon Gastric Balloon is a medical grade balloon that is inflated in the stomach and left in place for a few months. It is thereby meant to restrict the quantity of food that you can eat by reducing the space available to store food in your stomach. The presence of the balloon usually creates a feeling of fullness, decreases appetite and reduces food consumption, all of which can contribute to weight loss. It best suits people 10-15kg (1 ½ - 2 stones) overweight or patients with a BMI between 27-30 kg/m², though it can be used for heavier patients.

The balloon is an aid to assist weight loss and will not guarantee success if it is used as the only means to lose weight without changing lifestyle which should include a healthy diet and regular exercise. We will support you throughout the time when the balloon is in the stomach.

Am I eligible for an Obalon Gastric Balloon?

You will be suitable for Obalon Gastric Balloon treatment if

1. You have a BMI of 27 or above
2. Other treatments have failed to work and
3. You only need to lose a small amount of weight (1-2 stone).

When an Obalon Gastric Balloon may not be appropriate?

Your surgeon may decide not to offer you a Obalon Gastric Balloon if you

- Have anatomical abnormalities of the upper gastrointestinal (GI) tract i.e. you have abnormal configuration of the pharynx (throat), oesophagus (gullet), stomach or small bowel
- Have functional disorders of the upper GI tract i.e. your stomach or small bowel does not work well
- Have inflammatory and other pathophysiological conditions of the GI tract like Crohn's disease, Candida (thrush)
- Use medicines which may affect the integrity of the GI tract and/or your weight
- Had GI tract operations other than uncomplicated appendectomies
- Have endocrine disorders like Type 1 diabetes mellitus, untreated hypothyroidism or untreated Cushing's disease/syndrome
- Have severe, unstable/uncontrolled medical conditions of major organ systems
- Abuse alcohol and/or take illicit drugs
- Are undergoing chronic steroid or immunosuppressive therapy
- Are pregnant or breastfeeding or intend to become pregnant during the treatment period
- Intend to go scuba diving or travel in an unpressurised airplane cabin
- Have known allergies to products/foods of porcine (pig) origin
- Have untreated Helicobacter Pylori infection

Please inform your surgeon if any of the above applies to you.

Before the procedure

If you have chosen to go ahead with the Obalon balloon, your surgeon / doctor will give you a placebo capsule to take in clinic – if you can swallow this then you can have an Obalon balloon.

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You should fast for eight hours and avoid beverages other than water before balloon placement.

You will be given a prescription by your surgeon – commence the following medicines, ideally at least 8 hours before the procedure.

Hyoscine 1mg patch – one every 3 days – 2 patches – for sickness (nausea)

Zoton Fastab 30mg once daily for 4 weeks – to prevent ulcers

The Procedure

Obalon Gastric Balloon is a procedure performed on a day-case basis. You will be asked to swallow a capsule which contains the Obalon balloon following which you will have an x-ray to confirm that the balloon is in the stomach. The balloon is then inflated with Carbon-Di-Oxide gas. This causes the balloon to expand to a spherical shape. A second balloon or even a third balloon can be put in after a few weeks if this is necessary. The decision to add additional balloons is based on clinical judgement but may be influenced by feedback from you e.g. a reduction in satiety or a reduced rate of weight loss during the treatment period.

A 2nd balloon can be added four (4) weeks after the 1st balloon is placed, no sooner.

A 3rd balloon can be added four (4) weeks after the 2nd balloon is placed, no sooner.

The balloon/s remains in the stomach for 3 months before being removed endoscopically.

After the Procedure

You will be given medicines to reduce acidity and gastric secretions – the treatment will usually start before the procedure and continue for 12 weeks.

Dietary intake after placement of Obalon Gastric Balloon

Week one

Day 1

Immediately after the procedure, on the first day, you can drink fluids e.g.

- Tea and coffee
- Clear juices and
- Clear soup

Day 2

You should aim for soft food that will be easily digested and that avoid upsetting the stomach. You can eat

- Yoghourt
- Pureed vegetables
- Jelly
- Any soup

Day 3

You can introduce small amounts of normal solid food. You should try to

- Sip fluids slowly throughout the day

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- Eat light meals
- Eat 4-6 small meals a day
- Chew your food well
- Eat slowly and stop when you feel full. Too much food will make you vomit.
- Have some food even if you suffer from nausea and vomiting

Suitable food choices	
Porridge	Yogurt
Jacket potato without skins	Breakfast cereal
Scrambled egg	Soft vegetables without skins
Stewed fruit	Soft fruit without skins
Soup	Omelette
Rice pudding	Fish pie
Ice cream	Soft meat (minced beef) or fish

Week two – until balloon removal

By this stage we are looking at a balanced, varied and healthy diet for weight loss (see section on healthy eating). You should aim to:

- Eat regular meals – three per day
- Chew all food well
- Eat adequate carbohydrate (bread/cereal/pasta/rice/potato – at least one portion with each meal).
- Eat low fat alternatives
- Eat food with low sugar content
- Eat adequate fibre (cereals, fruits and vegetables)
- Avoid problem foods – you may find some foods more difficult to eat than others. Doughy bread and meats often cause problems. If you have initial difficulties avoid them for a few days and then retry.
- Stop when you feel full
- Sip fluids in between meals
- Drink low calorie drinks, preferably water
- Avoid drinking 30 minutes before and after meals.
- Avoid high energy liquids like alcohol and fruit juices as far as possible

Examples of suitable meals

Choose from the following at breakfast
Bran flakes (4 tbsp) with semi-skimmed or skimmed milk
Muesli (4 tbsp) with semi-skimmed or skimmed milk
Shredded wheat x 1 with semi-skimmed or skimmed milk
Weetabix x 1 with semi-skimmed or skimmed milk
Porridge (4 tbsp) with semi-skimmed or skimmed milk
Rice Krispies (4 tbsp) with semi-skimmed or skimmed milk
Toast: wholemeal/granary bread with low fat spread reduced sugar jam
Scrambled egg with wholemeal bread
Low fat, low sugar yogurt
Cup of tea/coffee
Glass of orange juice/tomato juice

Choose from the following at lunch
Jacket potato (200g) with cottage cheese (50g), tuna (25g), low fat cheese or beans

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(100g)
Sandwich (tuna/sardines in tomato sauce/lean ham/low fat cheese/cottage cheese)
Bagel/pitta bread/crackers
Beans (100g) on toast
Rice crackers with low fat soft cheese
Pasta salad
Rice
Scrambled egg on toast
Crisp bread
Soup with wholemeal bread x 2
Low fat yogurt
Piece of fruit
Potato salad

Choose one of the following for your evening meal
Chicken (75g) with new potatoes (2-3) and vegetables
Salmon, mackerel with rice (2 tbsp) and salad
Spaghetti bolognese (lean minced beef)
Chicken (75g) with pasta (2-3tbsp)
Vegetable lasagne/cannelloni
Pasta (2-3 tbsp) with tomato based pasta sauce
Chicken (75g) with rice (2tbsp) in tomato or vegetable based sauces
Convenience meal such as weight watchers, Tesco or Sainsbury healthy eating range
One day a week have your favourite meal eg Chinese, Indian, Pizza

Snacks
Apple/orange/banana/grapes/pear x1
Matchbox size dried fruit
Crackers x2
Crisp bread x2
Low fat, low sugar yoghurt x 1

Medicines to take home:

Hyoscine 1mg patch – one every 3 days – 2 patches – for sickness (nausea)
 Zoton Fastab 30mg once daily for 4 weeks – to prevent ulcers
 Prochlorperazine 5mg three times daily, as required – for sickness (nausea) – optional
 Buscopan 10mg three times daily, as required – for cramps – optional

Weight loss

Results with the Obalon Gastric Balloon can vary between patients and depending on the balloon used. You will lose around 1 – 1½ stone (6-9 kg) with an Obalon balloon and around 2 - 2½ stone (12-15 kg) with a Bioenteric balloon on average. The majority of weight loss is seen in the first two weeks and no further weight loss is expected after the initial few months.

You will get better results if you change your eating habits and combine this with exercise – you will not just lose weight because of the balloon. As the balloon is temporary, there is

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a chance that you will gain weight when the BIB is removed, unless you have made permanent changes to your lifestyle including healthy eating and exercise.

Removing the Balloon

The Obalon Gastric Balloon is licensed for use for 3 months - it must be removed from your stomach after this period. The surgeon will introduce the endoscope into your stomach and deflate the balloon before retrieving it.

Potential problems

Nausea and Vomiting

It is highly likely that you will experience nausea and vomiting following the placement of the Obalon Gastric Balloon. This is only temporary and normally resolves itself within the first week once the balloon has settled. You will be provided with some anti-sickness medicines to help you overcome your symptoms. Contact us if your symptoms persist or intensify.

Cramps

You may experience some cramp like pain in your upper abdomen which will, in most cases, settle in a few days. You can take Buscopan tablets which will be in your take home pack of medicines. Contact us if your symptoms persist or intensify.

Ulcers

You may develop an ulcer in your stomach. You must take the Zoton Fastab tablets which will be in your take home pack of medicines to reduce the likelihood of this.

Spontaneous balloon deflation

Rarely the balloon may deflate, especially if it has been left beyond the recommended period. If the balloon deflates, it will usually manoeuvre through the bowel and pass out of the body via the stools. However, there is a small risk that a deflated balloon could become lodged in the bowel and cause an obstruction. In this situation it may require surgical removal. Contact us if you start to regularly vomit every time you eat and drink something.

Bacterial growth in the balloon

There is a very small chance that bacteria could grow inside the balloon. During removal the balloon is punctured, if the fluid travels in to the bowels it could cause an infection. Contact us if you experience a sudden onset of diarrhoea following removal of the balloon.

Failure to Lose Weight

The Obalon Gastric Balloon is designed to place a restriction on the quantity of food that you can consume. Although the majority of people feel that their portion sizes are restricted, some individuals have reported that they rarely feel restricted and weight loss is more difficult.

Long-term outcome

You have to adopt a lifestyle which should include a healthy diet and regular exercise in order to maintain your weight in the long-term.