

How to be successful with a band

Dr Fermelia's tips on understanding and success with the band.

Stretch receptors. Understand that the gastric band works because it creates a small (approximately 4oz.) stomach pouch above the band. Stretch receptors in the pouch to tell the brain that you are full. Gastric distention creates a neural and hormonal signal to the brain of satiety (satisfaction, the opposite of hunger).

The pace of eating. This communication between the brain and the stomach takes several minutes, so we counsel patients to eat slowly (more than 15 minutes) and they will eat less. The slow pace of eating is important.

Solid food. The most important idea is to eat solid, dense food. This is what will stimulate the stretch receptors in the pouch and help you to feel full with a small amount of food. If you eat mushy or liquid calories, they will go quickly into the lower stomach and you will not feel full for long. Pressure in the pouch over time is what stimulates the stretch receptors. Studies show that is the *pressure* in the stomach wall of the pouch that creates the sense of fullness. Dense food stays in the pouch. Everything you eat should be solid and dense. Mushy foods are called "slider foods" because they slide right out of the pouch. You will feel unsatisfied all day. You will be hungry all the time.

Protein. Protein is the best food while losing or maintaining weight loss. Fat has about twice the calories per gram compared to protein and carbohydrates. Protein intake is going to minimize the loss of lean body mass (muscle) during the weight loss you will experience. Choose low fat proteins. Have protein with every meal. Eat protein first. Fill up on protein. Eat your entire protein portion completely before moving to other foods. Most people are overweight because they eat too many carbohydrates: simple sugars (sweets) or starches (bread, pasta, potatoes, etc.). The pouch will not let you overeat carbohydrates.

Eat only 3 times a day. If you follow these ideas, you will feel satisfied between meals. Our philosophy is that you should not just eat "when you are hungry". If you eat regularly you will not feel deprived and you will not get over hungry and throw all these ideas away. "No calories between meals" should be your policy.

The sequence of eating. Eat dense low fat protein with every meal. Every meal, including breakfast. Then eat vegetables and fruits. Then and only then, eat carbohydrates. The order of the food you eat is important.

Don't wash out your pouch. We need pouch distention pressure over time to help you to feel full. You want to feel full for hours, until your next meal. Don't drink with your meals. If you drink with your meals it is like eating mushy food. The food will move out of the pouch and you will soon be hungry. If you drink right after your meals you will wash the food out of the pouch and you will soon be hungry. We recommend waiting 30 to 60 minutes after meals. Between meals you should drink large quantities of NON calorie beverages.

Healthy food. You know what you should be eating. Since you are not going to get a lot of calories, they have to give you all the nutrients you need. Plan your meals. Have good choices available. If you are eating on the run, you are going to make bad choices. Don't settle on eating the "healthiest thing" you can find at the fast food restaurant. Eating right for a lifetime is an effort, but your lifelong success is worth it.

How to fail: Do you want to know how you fail weight loss surgery? Eat mushy or liquid unhealthy high calorie foods all day. That's how all the people you have encountered that have had unsuccessful weight loss surgery did it.

Success is a combination of anatomy (which we give you in the operating room and during the fill) and behavior. We will help you as much as we can with the behavior, but you have to be self motivated to stick to it and find what works for you while using these ideas. Consider that this needs to be a way of living, not a diet. This is how you are supposed to eat. It is how we should all eat. Keep a positive attitude. Lean on us if you need to.

