

GASTRIC BAND EATING RULES

The Adjustable Gastric Band is very effective at achieving significant maintained weight loss. To achieve this you must follow these eating rules and remember the keys to success.

Basically, it is all about eating small meals slowly, being less hungry and choosing healthy food.

EATING RULES

- + Chew Well
- + Eat Slowly
- + 20 Minute meals
- + 20 20 20 Rule
- + Small Plates
- + Small Food pieces and mouthfuls
- + Textured Nutritious Foods
- + Separate Liquids and Solids
- + Don't Drink Liquid Calories

KEYS TO SUCCESS

- + Band Well Positioned
- + Band Well Adjusted
- + Eating Rules
- + Exercise
- + Lifestyle
- + Head Space in order

CHEW WELL

The oesophagus has to push the food past the band. Well-chewed food is easier to push through and less likely to get stuck. You should be able to eat just about any food, including red meat, if you chew well. Chewing the food until it is a soft paste is required. Don't swallow chunky or long bits of food. Basically this will mean around 20 chews per mouthful. It is especially important to chew the first mouthful really well as this is the one that tends to get stuck.

EAT SLOWLY

After each mouthful, put the food down (or the cutlery) and resume about 20 seconds after you have swallowed. It can be hard to remember this when distracted or in a hurry or stressed. But it is really important. Allow some peaceful, quiet time to eat, at least until you are well practiced with eating with the band.

20 MINUTE MEALS

If you are eating slowly and chewing well, and eating a small meal, it should take around 20 minutes. You should feel full at this time. If you have food left over, then just leave it. If not, perhaps the band needs adjusting. Sometimes the fullness will start shortly after 20 minutes, so perhaps wait and see rather than having more food.

20 20 20

So to summarise the first three rules, they are 20 chews, 20 seconds between swallowing and starting the next mouthful, and 20 minutes upper time limit on the meal. (Or perhaps 20 20 20 is a new type of cricket!)

SMALL PLATES

The bigger the plate, the more food you will serve and the more you will want. So small plates will help you eat smaller meals. This is amazingly effective, so don't underestimate it. You could try an entree sized plate or one of the "Portion Perfection" plates to work on this. After a time of doing this the small meal will look right and you will enjoy the smaller meals more.

SMALL FOOD PIECES AND MOUTHFULS

Taking a big mouthful, especially when hungry, means you are more likely to let some food slide down without being chewed properly, and this will get blocked. To avoid this just chew off tiny bits, or eat tiny bits off the end of a fork. Aim for something that will sit on a 10 to 20 cent piece. If you are hungry, the first mouthful will probably be larger than you would otherwise like it to be. Perhaps have a drink of water to temporarily staunch your hunger to avoid blockage.

SEPARATE LIQUIDS AND SOLIDS

Separating these will make eating easier, meals smaller and fullness stronger, so well worth the effort. The idea is to stop drinking at least 10 minutes before you start eating, and then to not drink for about 1 hour after you finish eating. If you eat and drink at the same time, the liquids will go down quickly, but the solid foods slowly. So one of two things will happen. The liquids will wash the solids through and the meal will get bigger. Or the solids will block the rapidly arriving liquids, which will come flying back up. Or a combination of the two. In other words it will be quite chaotic to eat, unpredictable, and can result in vomiting, bigger meals, a poor sense of fullness and getting hungry too early.

TEXTURED NUTRITIOUS FOODS

The more textured a food is, the more it will fill you up and will generally have less calories. For example, a carrot snack is more filling and less calorific and more nutritious than a biscuit.

DON'T DRINK LIQUID CALORIES

They go down too fast and don't keep you full. A single apple is very filling with a band, but apple juice is not, and you could quickly and easily drink 5 apples worth. And this all adds up.