

## Surgery for Weight Loss

Laparoscopic adjustable gastric banding (LAGB) is an option reserved for seriously obese people (those with a body mass index greater than 40) or obese people who also have other serious health problems such as diabetes or heart disease. Surgery is considered only after dietary and medical treatments have failed.

Laparoscopic adjustable gastric banding (LAGB) is a surgical treatment for obesity that is becoming increasingly popular in Australia.

LAGB is done via keyhole surgery. A silicone band with an inflatable inner balloon is placed around the upper part of the stomach, effectively reducing the capacity of the stomach.

The band ensures a feeling of fullness after ingesting only a small amount of food. And because the band controls the passage of food to the rest of the digestive tract, the feeling will continue for several hours after a meal, thereby reducing the urge to eat between meals.

The tightness of the gastric band can be adjusted by means of injecting fluid into or out of it through an access port under the skin of the abdomen. This adjustment is a simple procedure and can be done on an outpatient basis.

LAGB does not affect the digestive processes of the body, so food is absorbed normally. It is very important that anyone having the LAGB is given a management plan that includes dietary advice and an exercise program. Regular follow-up with the doctor and other health professionals is needed after the procedure to ensure its effectiveness.

After LAGB, people can eat three balanced meals a day, although the portions are smaller than they were prior to the operation. They should not eat between meals and they should not drink liquids with meals.

LAGB has been shown to be very effective for weight loss: research has shown it has been associated with an almost 60% decrease in excess weight after two years, and an almost 70% decrease after four years. This degree of weight loss has been proven to have positive effects on a number of medical conditions, particularly type II diabetes, arthritis and hypertension.

Improvements in surgical techniques have meant complications following LAGB are now uncommon.