

In the Bag: What to Pack, What to Leave at Home

The average hospital stay for LAP-BAND[®] System patients is less than 24 hours. Still, a few things will go a long way toward making you feel comfortable. See what doctors and patients say to bring and to take out of the bag.

One of the greatest things about the LAP-BAND[®] System surgery is that the average hospital stay afterward is less than 24 hours. In fact, the surgery itself takes about an hour, and many patients stay only overnight—if at all. Many people qualify for outpatient surgery, since the procedure involves only a few small incisions. “I wasn’t even there long enough to brush my teeth,” says Lyn Donley, 62, who had LAP-BAND[®] System surgery in August 2006.

Kevin Bessette, 25, who had LAP-BAND[®] System surgery in July 2007, says all he took was a book. “I’m a pretty laid-back guy.” Since his stay was only one night, he says, “There wasn’t even time to need anything.”

Still, on surgery day, there are a few things that can go a long way toward making you feel more comfortable—and a few things not worth bringing. Here’s what patients and bariatric clinic staffers recommend.

Start with These Essentials

“My doctor told me exactly what to pack,” says Donley. Most pre-op checklists recommend bringing the following items, but your healthcare team may have a longer list:

- A set of comfortable, loose-fitting clothing—such as a track suit or loose dress—that doesn’t bind where the incisions will be.
- Low, easy-on shoes such as sneakers with Velcro.
- A complete list of insurance information and two days’ worth of all current medications.
- Your CPAP machine, if you have sleep apnea.
- A small, soft pillow to rest between your stomach and the seat belt during the ride home.

Ask What Other Items Will Be Provided

Northwest Weight Loss Surgery (NWWLS) in Everett, Washington, for instance, provides “big and tall”-sized bathrobes, sleepwear, and socks, as well as perks like lip gloss. They even send post-op gift baskets to the hotel rooms of out-of-town patients that include juice, water, soup, and other things they’ll need. “If you’ll be staying overnight, you probably don’t even have to bring toiletries, though you may prefer your own brands,” says Jessie H. Ahroni, PhD, ARNP, author of Laparoscopic Adjustable Gastric Banding and bariatric program manager at NWWLS. “Ask if the facility has sleepwear and slippers in your size. If not, bring your own so you’ll be comfortable,” adds Ahroni, who had LAP-BAND[®] System surgery 10 years ago.

Don’t Overdo the “Amusements”

“You’re groggy after surgery, so you won’t feel like doing much,” says Donley. Ahroni agrees, “You don’t need

your laptop either. A lot of people come in expecting to work after surgery, but you'll probably be too foggy to do that." Ahroni also recommends leaving your kids, pets, and cell phone behind while you're at the facility. "You can't use the phone near the surgery suites anyway, and children and animals are just a distraction," she explains. Consider your visit a chance for forced peace and quiet, and relish it! Another thing to leave home: jewelry (and other valuables). The less you take with you, the less you need to keep track of—or risk losing.

Bring a Designated Driver

The most important thing to "bring" with you to your appointment, says Ahroni, is a responsible adult to drive you home—and stay with you for 24 hours. In fact, NWWLS requires you to promise to do this for safety's sake.

IMPORTANT LAP-BAND[®] SYSTEM SAFETY INFORMATION

Indications: The LAP-BAND[®] System is indicated for use in weight reduction for severely obese patients with a Body Mass Index (BMI) of at least 40 or a BMI of at least 35 with one or more severe comorbid conditions, or those who are 100 lbs. or more over their estimated ideal weight.

Contraindications: The LAP-BAND[®] System is not recommended for non-adult patients, patients with conditions that may make them poor surgical candidates or increase the risk of poor results (e.g., inflammatory or cardiopulmonary diseases, GI conditions, symptoms or family history of autoimmune disease, cirrhosis), who are unwilling or unable to comply with the required dietary restrictions, who have alcohol or drug addictions, or who currently are or may be pregnant.

Warnings: The LAP-BAND[®] System is a long-term implant. Explant and replacement surgery may be required. Patients who become pregnant or severely ill, or who require more extensive nutrition may require deflation of their bands.

Anti-inflammatory agents, such as aspirin, should be used with caution and may contribute to an increased risk of band erosion.

Adverse Events: Placement of the LAP-BAND[®] System is major surgery and, as with any surgery, death can occur. Possible complications include the risks associated with the medications and methods used during surgery, the risks associated with any surgical procedure, and the patient's ability to tolerate a foreign object implanted in the body.

Band slippage, erosion and deflation, reflux, obstruction of the stomach, dilation of the esophagus, infection, or nausea and vomiting may occur. Reoperation may be required.

Rapid weight loss may result in complications that may require additional surgery. Deflation of the band may alleviate excessively rapid weight loss or esophageal dilation.

Important: For full safety information please visit www.Lapband.com, talk with your doctor, or call Allergan Product Support at 1-800-624-4261.

CAUTION: Rx only.