

How Men Can Win at Losing

LAP-BAND[®] System surgery isn't just for women. And men don't need to feel at a loss for support. Here are some strategies men can use to achieve their post-op goals.

Everywhere you look, you see weight-loss programs dedicated to women. Fit into that summer dress...Lean on other women as you lose weight together... But men are also struggling with weight and need both support and encouragement for their LAP-BAND[®] System surgery to be successful. What can help you break through some common barriers?

Know You're Not Alone

"When you categorize LAP-BAND[®] patients, you'll find that about 75 to 85% are women," says John Dixon, MD, head of the Obesity Research Unit at Monash University in Melbourne, Australia. But that shouldn't mean men need to feel isolated. "Men need to know that open communication isn't a sign of weakness; it's the only way to make this surgery work," says Dr. Dixon. He highly recommends finding a support group that includes men, even if you need to turn to online forums. (LapBandTalk.com, for instance, has a "men's room" forum.) "It may help in case there aren't enough male LAP-BAND[®] patients in your area," he says. "You may also like being anonymous."

Talk with Your Doctor about More Than the Physical

Kevin Bessette, who lost 120 pounds with the help of LAP-BAND[®] System, went the online route. But both he and Dr. Dixon believe that men need doctors involved in their life to figure out what information is accurate. Bessette is fortunate enough to now work at a bariatric center as an office manager, so connecting with a doctor is easy. "I talk with my doctor every other day," he says. "Though you don't need to go as far as that, the more you talk with your healthcare providers, the more comfortable you'll feel asking important questions." Check if your doctor's office has a way to get in touch more frequently than visits—maybe a phone or e-mail check-in system.

Don't Be Afraid to Stand Out in a Crowd

One of the trickiest parts for men may be navigating those "manly" eating events with friends—such as happy hour and sporting events. "Men sometimes go off the diet when they're having steaks with the guys," Dr. Dixon says. "They don't want to be seen as not participating. But this is a particularly bad idea when you haven't tried a food out before. You don't want to be stuck in the bathroom trying to work through a blockage." What to do? Plan ahead for what you know you can eat and enjoy. Not ready to share your LAP-BAND[®] System decision with all the guys? Say you're trying to cut back...for your health. That's all the details you need to give. A true friend couldn't argue with that. And if you are ready to share news about your LAP-BAND[®] System decision, you might be pleasantly surprised at the pats on the back you get.

Help Your Partner Understand

Because men aren't as likely to be the food buyer and preparer, it's important that you communicate to your partner that certain foods just don't agree. But most of the time, you can reassure your partner that she won't need to make dual dinners—it's more about quantities. "You need to help her understand the portion size that's best for you," says Dr. Dixon. That may take some time and feedback to get it just right. It can be superhelpful for your partner to come to some doctor visits with you. That way, she can hear the information and tips firsthand.

Ask for What You Need

Always remind yourself that communicating with the people in your life, even when it feels awkward, is for their benefit, too, says Bessette. After all, they want you around for a long time. As a 25-year-old who once weighed 275 pounds and had hypertension and cholesterol issues, it's a much different world for Bessette now that his scale reads 155. "It's terrific to look great," he says, "but knowing I'm healthy, that's what really matters."

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.