



LAP-BAND® FAQ **(frequently asked questions)**

What is the LAP-BAND® System, and why should I choose it over another type of weight loss surgery?

The LAP-BAND® System is an implantable device created to help severely overweight people lose excess pounds so their weight-related health conditions can improve and they can enjoy a higher quality of life. In essence, this procedure is a safe and effective tool to help you lose weight and keep it off. It is performed laparoscopically and has a quick recovery. It is based on the simple principal of helping you feel full, without requiring stomach stapling or affecting how your body absorbs food and nutrients.

Is the LAP-BAND® System FDA-approved?

Yes. It was originally approved by the FDA in 2001. In February 2011, the FDA approved expanded use of the system for adults with obesity. **The LAP-BAND® System is the first and only FDA-approved device for weight loss surgery for patients with a BMI of 30** (or more) who have failed conservative weight reduction alternatives such as diet and exercise, and have at least one obesity-related health condition (co-morbidity).¹

How does the LAP-BAND® System work?

The LAP-BAND® System is a hollow ring that goes around the top of the stomach, limiting the amount of food you can eat. The ring has tubing along the inside that can be filled with saline solution to make the band tighter, further restricting the amount of food you can eat. When you eat less, your body burns fat to get energy, so you lose weight. The smaller stomach also means you will feel full sooner and for a longer period of time.

Why is the LAP-BAND® System considered adjustable?

The LAP-BAND® System is adjustable because it can be made tighter or looser by adding or removing saline solution through an access port, so your stomach can be resized to fit changes in your lifestyle. Adjustments are made in the Lap-Band surgeon's office, and do not require surgery. Adjustments are not always necessary. Your surgeon will advise you as to whether an adjustment is needed.

How is the LAP-BAND® System different from other weight loss surgeries?

The major difference between the LAP-BAND® System and other weight loss surgeries is that the LAP-BAND® System does not require cutting, stapling, or rerouting of internal organs, and does not affect mineral deficiencies or nutrient absorption. Studies show that Lap-Band patients experience a slow, steady weight loss that is comparable to the total weight loss for gastric bypass patients over a three year period.²

How much weight will I lose?

Weight loss varies from person to person, but most patients lose about 2 to 3 pounds per week for the first year after having the procedure. The rate of weight loss after 12 to 18 months may begin to slow down depending on the amount of excess weight a patient has pre-operatively, the patient's post-operative follow-up routine, and his or her diet and physical activity. Compliant patients who eat responsibly, exercise, undergo band adjustments when needed, and make lifestyle changes will continue to enjoy steady weight loss and be able to keep their weight from returning. On average all three of the most commonly performed bariatric procedures render between 55% and 60% excess body weight at the 5 year point.³ That means most patients who are 100 pounds overweight can expect to lose between 55 and 60 pounds over a 5-year period following bariatric surgery. It is important that patients not focus solely on the amount of weight loss when determining success. They should instead consider their improved quality of life and resolution of serious health conditions. The LAP-BAND® System has a 94%

patient satisfaction rating, therefore the majority of patients who undergo this procedure are satisfied with the amount of weight they lose.⁴

When will I start to see results?

Weight loss can begin soon after the surgery, because the LAP-BAND® System restricts the amount of food you can eat. After a few weeks, if you follow the general nutritional guidelines, you should begin to lose a few pounds every week.

Will I feel deprived or hungry?

If you follow your nutrition guidelines and chew your food properly, you will feel full after a small meal for a longer period of time. You should not feel hungry or deprived. If you experience hunger, you should contact your surgeon's office to schedule an appointment to have saline added to your band.

Will I be able to eat whatever I want?

You can eat whatever you want; however, the LAP-BAND® System restricts the amount of food you need to eat to feel full, so you will be able to enjoy small amounts of the foods your body can tolerate without causing you discomfort. Please note that the most successful Lap-Band patients are those who choose to eat nutritious foods high in protein and low in calories. The same attention should be given to the intake of liquids. You should avoid liquids that are high in calories, and restrict drinking liquids from the beginning of a meal until 60-90 minutes post-meal in order to increase your fullness and lead to better weight loss.

Does the LAP-BAND® System limit physical activity?

No. The LAP-BAND® System does not limit or hamper physical activity. You should be able to do everything, from simple stretches to strenuous exercises. In fact, exercise should become a regular part of your post-surgical routine. Remember, the LAP-BAND® System is simply a tool that helps you lose weight—diet and exercise are still required.

How will the LAP-BAND® System effect my overall health?

In addition to being an effective long-term weight loss procedure, the LAP-BAND® System is also successful in improving and resolving conditions often related to obesity such as type II diabetes, gastroesophageal reflux disease, hypertension, joint pain, and sleep apnea. These conditions are not only a burden on your health, but also your pocket book. The cost of medications to treat such conditions can be crippling. As Lap-Band helps you lose weight, your weight-related conditions become better controlled, thus leading to fewer medications and more money in your bank account. Also, after significant weight loss, Lap-Band patients experience a general improvement in their quality of life, as they are able to enjoy activities previously limited by obesity. Playing with children, taking a walk, or completing simple household tasks can once again be enjoyed.

What happens during the surgery and how long does it take?

The LAP-BAND® System is placed laparoscopically, which requires only a few small incisions. During the surgery, the LAP-BAND® System is put around the top of your stomach to reduce its size and limit the amount of food that can fit inside it. On average, the surgery takes about 45 minutes to an hour.

How long is the hospital stay?

The average hospital stay after the procedure is 23 hours or less. However, occasionally an overnight stay may be dictated by a patient's insurance payor, or preferred by the surgeon, depending on the patient's co-morbid condition.

How long does recovery take after the procedure?

Patients are released to go back to work according to the way they feel, usually after one week. Total recovery time differs from person to person.

What can I expect before undergoing the procedure?

Some insurance plans may specify certain requirements such as a consultation with a nutritionist and/or psychologist. For some patients, additional pre-op testing such as a sleep study (for sleep apnea), endoscopy, or other exams may be deemed necessary by your surgeon or anesthesiologist. All patients are expected to follow a pre-op diet to be determined by your surgeon.

What kind of post-surgical support can I expect to receive?

At Cooper Clinic, we offer a personalized approach to post-surgical support. By offering easy accessibility to our physicians and staff, patients are provided the chance to have their questions and needs addressed individually. While we feel that the best advice will come from your own surgeon and staff, some patients benefit from sharing their weight loss experience with others. Those patients are encouraged to attend the Arkansas/Oklahoma Bariatric Support Group which will meet monthly in Fort Smith beginning May, 2011. Meetings will be held from 6:30 pm – 7:30 pm at Aspen Hotel & Suites (behind Chili's in Fort Smith) the first Monday of each month. For further information, contact JoAnna Brewer, (479) 462-9211, joannab1915@yahoo.com. You might also want to register for "mylapbandjourney" to receive personalized web-based support pre and post-operatively at www.lapband.com.

Who is eligible for the LAP-BAND® System?

Typically, patients will qualify for the LAP-BAND® System with a **BMI of 30** or greater with 1 or more related health conditions (co-morbidities). This generally equates to being at least 80+ pounds over ideal body weight, however this is somewhat variable.

Is the LAP-BAND® System the only bariatric procedure performed at Cooper Clinic?

No. Cooper Clinic surgeons have been performing gastric bypass surgery for several years and continue to perform that procedure regularly. You are urged to talk to your doctor to determine which bariatric procedure is right for you.

Will insurance pay for the LAP-BAND® System?

Many insurers cover the LAP-BAND® System. Patients without insurance coverage may qualify for financing through a bank loan or programs such as Care Credit (carecredit.com). There are numerous creative ways to pay for surgery. At the end of the day, it is important to remember that you cannot put a price tag on improving your health or quality of life. If insurance does not provide coverage, you may save money in the long run by paying for this procedure which can help reduce your health-related medications and expenses.

How can I determine if my insurance plan covers the LAP-BAND® procedure?

Because checking and understanding insurance benefits can be confusing, our office will provide you with verification of your benefits at no cost. You can request this free service online at www.cooperweightlossurgery.com. If you do not have access to a computer, contact our Patient Educator, Erin Harmon, at (479) 274-3215 and she can complete the form for you.

Is LAP-BAND® a covered benefit for patients with Medicare coverage?

Medicare only provides coverage for this procedure at designated hospitals which have been named by a surgical review corporation as Bariatric Centers of Excellence. Among other criteria, these facilities have paid a fee for participation in this program. Currently, there is not a local hospital participating in this program; therefore, Medicare will not provide payment for Lap-Band® surgery in Fort Smith at this time. Please note that we are actively pursuing certification as a Bariatric Center of Excellence but cannot specify when that process will be complete.

Please keep in mind that following Lap-Band surgery, band adjustments will be needed regularly at first, then periodically. If you choose to have Lap-Band performed out of area, the adjustments and post-operative visits will require travel for those appointments. Like some other Medicare patients, you might consider financing your surgery in order to have the convenience and excellence of local care provided by Cooper Clinic surgeons.

If I do not have insurance coverage, how much can I expect to pay for this procedure and what is covered in that price?

For those patients without insurance coverage, we have established a self-pay package price of \$14,500. This includes standard pre-op tests and hospital expense, physician fees, and all band adjustments for one year. For more information on this comprehensive package price or to discuss financing options, contact Erin Harmon, Patient Educator at (479) 274-3215, erin.harmon@cooperclinic.com. (Even if the Lap-Band procedure is not a covered benefit under your insurance plan, many of the pre-op tests associated with this procedure may be covered.)

Why should I choose to have LAP-BAND® performed by a Cooper Clinic surgeon?

Cooper Clinic has three surgeons who perform this procedure. This team approach ensures that there is always a surgeon available anytime a patient desires an adjustment or needs some other type of Lap-Band related medical attention. All three are Board-Certified by the American Board of Surgery. All three have also been fully trained and certified to perform this procedure by Allergan, the manufacturer of the LAP-BAND® System. Cooper Clinic is dedicated to providing our patients with a safe and effective weight loss procedure.

How can I learn more?

We urge you to attend one of our free LAP-BAND® seminars. For dates and times, go to www.cooperweightlossurgery.com or call (479) 274-5100. Following the seminar, you may choose to schedule a complimentary consultation appointment with one of our LAP-BAND® System surgeons. You can also learn more by contacting Erin Harmon, our Lap-Band Patient Educator, at (479) 274-3215, erin.harmon@cooperclinic.com, by going to www.lapband.com, or by calling 1-800-LAPBAND.

¹ FDA Approval Letter and ASMBS position statement on early intervention Lap-Band.

² O'Brien P, McPhail T, Chaston T, et al. Systematic review of medium-term weight loss after bariatric operations. *Obes Surg.* 2006;16:1032-40.

³ 1. O'Brien PE, McPhail T, Chaston TB, Dixon JB. Systematic review of medium-term weight loss after bariatric operations. *Obes Surg.* 2006;16:1032-1040. 2. O'Brien PE, Dixon JB. Lap-Band®: Outcomes and Results. *J Lap Adv Surg Tech.* 2003;13(4):265-70. 3. Parikh MS, Laker S, Weiner M, et al. Objective comparison of complications resulting from laparoscopic bariatric procedures. *J Am Coll Surg.* 2006;202:252-261. 4. Chapman AE, Kiroff G, Game P, et al. Laparoscopic adjustable gastric banding in the treatment of obesity: A systematic literature review. *Surgery.* 2004;135(3):326-51.

⁴ Data on File at Allergan. Data was Pulled from a global patient satisfaction survey taken during APEX. APEX is the only US based, prospective study evaluating the safety and effectiveness of LAGB using the LAP-BAND AP. This multi center (44sites), open label, 5 year evaluation of 508 patients was designed to evaluate weight loss outcomes using best practice standard of care with the Lap-BandAP system in a real world clinical setting.