

The Allurion intragastric balloon



Bariatrics and upper
gastrointestinal service

Patient information

Kindness, Respect, Teamwork
Everyone, Every day

Introduction

This booklet has been designed to give you information about the Allurion intragastric balloon.

It aims to help you understand more about how it works, the placement of it, aftercare including dietary advice and explain the potential side effects.

What is the Allurion intragastric balloon?

The balloon works by partially filling the stomach and slowing the emptying of food, which should lead to an increased feeling of fullness. It can help you control portion size and, with appropriate diet and behavioural modifications, should lead to weight loss.

What does the balloon procedure involve?

The Allurion balloon consists of a small capsule which is swallowed, containing the deflated balloon, attached to a thin tube. This is inflated with 550ml sterile water via the tube to the balloon. Once filled, the tube is removed by gentle traction.

You will have an X-ray to ensure that the balloon is in the correct position.

Most people find that they can swallow the balloon easily. If you are finding it difficult your surgeon will assist you, by guiding the balloon into place with a guide wire or asking you to swallow a fizzy drink. It is rare that people will require an endoscopy or surgical intervention.

The whole procedure in total usually takes around 20 minutes.

Am I suitable for this procedure?

The weight management and bariatric surgery team will assess your eligibility for this procedure. It may be used to promote further weight loss from that already achieved together with behavioural changes making bariatric surgery safer for you, or to achieve weight loss required to enable you to have a different procedure.

The balloon is not designed to be a permanent treatment for obesity.

How much weight will I lose?

With appropriate eating and lifestyle behaviours, it may be possible to lose between 13 and 18kg (2 stone 11lbs and 2 stone 11lbs) or 10 to 15% of your total body weight, but results can be individual.

What happens before the procedure?

Two weeks before

- It is recommended you start a prescription of a strong antacid medication from your GP (omeprazole 20mg twice per day) for two weeks before the procedure and continue until the balloon is passed. The balloon can cause the stomach to produce extra acid which may cause reflux, or can bounce against the stomach wall which may cause ulcers. The antacid will reduce this risk.
- Ensure you have a supply of post-procedure foods and liquids as detailed in this booklet.

The day before

- Drink plenty of water (aim for 2 litres of fluid in the day) to avoid dehydration.

What happens on the day of the procedure?

- It is advised that you **do not eat food for 12 hours before** and **drink water only up to 2 hours before** the procedure. If you need to take tablets, they may be taken with small sips of water in the morning of the procedure.
- Wear comfortable clothing and shoes. If you wear a bra, please make sure it is non-underwired.
- Take your anti-sickness medication with a sip of water when you arrive at the X-ray department.
- It is recommended you have someone with you at the hospital to take you home after the procedure.

When you arrive at the X-ray department, you will be seen by the surgeon who will talk you through the procedure and ask you to sign a consent form. Please ask questions if you are unsure.

You will be given the high dose anti-sickness medication called Akynzeo, which you take the morning of the procedure when you come into hospital.

This stays in your system for a long time and helps you over those first few days. Without this, when the balloon has been placed, you will feel very sick as the stomach tries to reject the balloon which can lead to sickness and retching.

When advised to do so by the surgical team, start sipping room temperature fluids. Use a teaspoon to sip off or use a

straw as this enables you to take your time. Do not sip continually as you need to allow time for the fluid to leave your stomach.

Slowly increase your quantity of fluids, building up to 2 litres per day but do not gulp or drink quickly. Avoid using a straw if you experience burping/trapped wind.

The fluids you are allowed are listed on page 8.

How will I feel after the procedure?

The first few days may be uncomfortable as your stomach gets used to the presence of the balloon.

Adjusting to the balloon is different for each individual and you may experience nausea, vomiting, bloating, diarrhoea and cramping at first. These symptoms are normal and should be expected. If you are worried, please contact the team.

After a few days you will start to feel a lot better. You may still feel some sickness, but generally this will only occur if you overeat or drink too much or too fast.

To minimise discomfort, it is advised you avoid any unnecessary physical activity for the first week after the procedure. When you have become used to the balloon, you can then increase your activity levels as comfortable.

Why do I need follow up blood tests?

You will need to have nutritional blood tests 3 months after balloon placement or more frequently if there is a concern. This is an important part of your monitoring as having a balloon increases your risk of nutritional deficiency and associated complications. The bariatric dietitians will provide you and your GP with further information.

Do I need to take vitamin and mineral supplements?

You will need to take specific daily vitamin and mineral supplements whilst you have the balloon in place as you may not be able to meet your nutritional needs through food alone (as your portion sizes will be smaller). Please ensure you buy these before your procedure.

Start taking them when you are tolerating solid food, usually from day 7 after balloon placement.

Summary of vitamins and minerals to be taken

Vitamin/ mineral supplement	When to take	Instruction
Adcal D3 or Theical-D3.	Immediately after surgery.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 1 twice daily (Adcal D3) or ½ tablet, twice daily (Theical-D3).• Ask GP for a prescription.
Forceval capsule.	When on solid food.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• One per day.• Ask GP for a prescription.
Soluble, chewable or liquid multivitamin.	Immediately after surgery until on solid food.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• One per day.• Buy from a shop.
Vitamin D3.	When on solid food.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 25ug, one twice daily.• Buy from a shop.
Thiamine (Vitamin B1).	When on solid food.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 50 to 100mg daily.• Buy from a shop.

Summary of medications to be taken

Medication	When to take	Instruction
Omeprazole	Starting two weeks before the procedure, continuing to the end of balloon therapy at around 16 weeks.	20mg twice a day or 40mg daily on prescription from GP.
Akynzeo	The morning of balloon insertion.	One tablet given to you on the day at the hospital.
Scopoderm patch	Placed after the procedure.	One patch placed behind the ear to help with sickness/cramping placed in the hospital.
Travel sickness remedies such as Cinnarizine	As needed after the procedure.	As recommended on the box. Buy over the counter.
Soluble paracetamol or co-codamol	As needed after the procedure.	As recommended on the box. Buy over the counter.

What food and drink can I have after the balloon is inserted?

First 48 hours - clear fluids only

For 48 hours after your procedure, continue to have sips of clear fluids only. Examples include:

- water
- decaffeinated tea or coffee without milk
- diluted clear non-acidic fruit juice like apple or mango (not citrus fruits like orange juice)
- clear broth for instance Bovril, Oxo, Marmite
- reduced sugar or low calorie squash
- sugar free ice lollies

Avoid:

- fizzy drinks
- alcohol
- caffeine
- chocolate
- ice cream

If you manage these well, the next day start on the listed food below.

Day 3 – Pureed food

It's important that you feel that you are managing liquids before you move onto foods.

If you are feeling you are not coping with the foods, go back to the previous consistency, then gradually work up to the consistency again.

Generally, you will be able to use the same foods as the rest of your family by blending in a food processor or with a hand blender. We recommend blending the meal components separately to keep the different tastes and colours; you may need to add some fluid (gravy, sauce, water) to aid the blending.

You should incorporate protein into each meal (see examples below). Do not worry if you are only able to eat small portions. Stop if you feel discomfort or pressure.

Drink plenty of water and avoid eating and drinking at the same time, drink at least one glass 30 minutes before each meal and two glasses 30 minutes after to 'rinse' the balloon.

Pureed meal ideas

Breakfast (choose one of the below)

- 2 to 3 tablespoons of instant oat cereal with skimmed milk.
- 1 very sloppy wheat biscuit type cereal with skimmed milk.
- A flavoured light yoghurt or low fat natural yoghurt.

Snack (choose one of the below)

- 200 mls or grams apple, pear, peach or banana puree.
- Smoothie.
- A flavoured light yoghurt or low fat natural yoghurt.
- 100ml skimmed milk.

Lunch (choose one of the below)

- Blended mashed potato with melted cheese.
- Soup (not lumpy) containing a protein source for instance blended lentils/beans/meat/milk.
- Blended lean meat/fish/egg and gravy or sauce with soft/blended vegetable.

Snack

- As above snacks, if required

Main meal

Try to include protein, starch and vegetables (one from each below)

Protein:

- Blended fine minced meat with gravy (200g).
- Blended soft beans (preferably tinned) or lentils.
- Blended soft fish with white sauce (200g).

Starch:

- Blended mashed potato (100g).

Vegetables:

- Puree soft, well cooked vegetables like carrot or swede.

Fluids between meals:

- Low calorie drinks such as tea, diluted fruit juice, no added sugar squash, water.

Day 5 – Soft food

Do not rush this transition. If you are feeling you are not coping with the foods, go back to the previous consistency, then gradually work up to the consistency again.

Eat slowly, chew well and remember the 20-20-20 wait a minute rule when eating. You should now be learning to listen to your body.

Pay attention if you develop feelings of fullness, pressure or discomfort. These are signs that you should slow down or stop eating entirely in order to avoid vomiting. Please contact us if you are still experiencing nausea and/or vomiting 4 days after the procedure.

Drink plenty of water and avoid eating and drinking at the same time, drink at least one glass ½ hour before each meal and two glasses ½ hour after to 'rinse' the balloon.

Soft meal ideas

Breakfast (choose one of the below):

- 2 to 3 tablespoons of porridge with skimmed milk.
- 1 very sloppy wheat biscuit type cereal with skimmed milk.
- A flavoured light yoghurt or low fat natural yoghurt.

Snack (choose one of the below):

- 200 mls/grams apple, pear, peach puree.
- Smoothie.
- Mashed banana.
- A flavoured light yoghurt or low fat natural yoghurt.
- A low fat custard pot.
- 100ml skimmed milk.

Lunch (choose one of the below):

- Mashed potato (or soft potato mashed with a fork) with baked beans (mashed), melted cheese or tinned tuna.
- Soup (not lumpy) containing a protein source such as lentils/beans/ meat/milk.
- Crackers (chew to a mush) with low fat soft cheese (such as cottage cheese).

Snack

As above snacks, if required.

Main meal

Try to include protein, starch and vegetables at each meal (one from each section).

Protein:

- Blended fine minced meat with gravy (200g).
- Soft beans (preferably tinned) or lentils.
- Blended soft fish with white sauce (200g).
- Tinned tuna.
- Soft egg for example mashed boiled egg or scrambled.

Starch:

- Rice (30g)
- Blended mashed potato (100g).

Vegetables:

- Mashed carrot or swede.
- Other vegetables cooked until soft and mashable.

Other meal ideas:

- Cottage pie with soft vegetables.
- Fish pie with soft vegetables.
- Cauliflower cheese (do not make with too much cheese/use low fat cheese and skimmed milk).
- Soft, healthy range, ready meal.

Fluids between meals:

- Low calorie drinks such as tea, diluted fruit juice, no added sugar squash, water.

From day 7 – Solid food (normal food)

This is another transition stage so if you feel uncomfortable go back to the previous food you tolerated.

General tips for healthier eating

- Have 4 to 5 small meals throughout the day.
- Use a smaller side plate instead of a dinner plate to control the portion size.
- Incorporate a source of protein into each meal with vegetables/salad/fruit and a small amount of starchy carbohydrates.
- Avoid fibrous or tough foods, such as stringy vegetables or dry meat.
- Eat slowly and chew your food well to improve tolerance.
- Remember the 20/20/20 rule.
- Stop eating immediately when you feel satisfied or if you feel discomfort or uncomfortable pressure in your stomach.
- Introduce solid foods one at a time.
- Try cooked foods before hard/raw foods.
- Limit bread, pasta, rice and similar starches. These foods can stick to the balloon causing bad breath.

- Drink plenty of water and avoid eating and drinking at the same time, drink at least one glass 30 minutes before each meal and two glasses 30 minutes after to rinse the balloon.

Solid food (normal food) meal ideas:

Breakfast

- 150ml of unsweetened fruit juice with (choose one of the below):
 - High fibre cereal Such as Wheatabix with skimmed/semi-skimmed milk.
 - Porridge with skimmed/semi-skimmed milk.
 - One slice of toast with low fat spread.

Lunch

- 60g/2oz lean meat, chicken, fish, lentils, baked beans or an egg or 30g of low fat cheese.
- One slice of bread, 2 to 3 crackers, 1 small pita bread or 1 to 2 tablespoons cooked rice or mashed potato.
- One portion of light flavoured yoghurt or low fat natural yoghurt or fruit.

Main meal

As lunch suggestions above or choose one of the below

- Spaghetti bolognese.
- Chicken and vegetable stir fry with noodles using spray oil.
- Tuna steak, new potatoes and salad.
- Cottage pie and soft vegetables.
- Fish pie and soft vegetables.
- Cauliflower cheese (do not use too much cheese/use low fat cheese and skimmed milk to make).
- Healthy range ready meal.

Snacks

Try to include small, high protein snacks if needed between meals the bariatric dietitians can help advise on how many snacks you need a day. Some suitable snacks are listed below.

- Rice cakes and low fat soft cheese.
- Low fat yoghurt.
- A boiled egg.
- A small bowl of no added sugar cereal and skimmed/semi-skimmed milk.

Summary of required eating behaviour

It takes a while to get used to the feeling of the balloon being in place and judging how much you can comfortably eat.

You are changing very in-grained behaviour as you may have been eating in a certain way for many years and it is very difficult to change that overnight.

There will be occasions when you overeat or eat too fast. The trick is to learn from your experience and modify what and how you eat.

Generally, we advise you to:

- eat slowly
- chew your food well
- concentrate on what you are doing when you eating.

Weighing yourself

It can be useful to weigh yourself regularly (no more than once a week) and note your body composition as this will change.

Your overall weight may stay the same but fat and muscle may change. The least healthy fat for us is known as “visceral fat” which sits around our organs. Any decrease in this is good for your health.

If you choose not to weigh yourself there are other markers of change for instance how your clothes fit, your level of movement, management of medical conditions affected by weight and your ability to perform everyday tasks.

What are the risks of having an Allurion balloon?

The Allurion balloon is filled with clear liquid. If the balloon leaks or bursts you will lose the sensation of fullness from the balloon. This is rare and happens in 1 to 2% of cases. If this did happen, the balloon would be excreted as per the information on page 20 of this booklet.

If you feel like you have lost the sensation of fullness from the balloon before the planned 16 weeks please let the team know.

What are the side-effects?

It is common to experience nausea, abdominal cramping and occasional vomiting after balloon placement. This tends to be well controlled with the medications previously discussed. If these symptoms are ongoing and/or you can not keep fluids down contact the bariatric team urgently. If it is out of hours, you should attend your local A&E.

Vomiting

In case of vomiting, stop eating for at least two hours, then

drink a small amount of water and proceed with soft, bland foods when tolerated. Aim to get back to solid foods as soon as possible. If the vomiting persists beyond 2 to 3 days, or you are unable to take fluids, you should contact the bariatric team in order to prevent dehydration.

Abdominal cramps

Persistent cramping after the first week may be a sign the balloon has moved. If this occurs, you should contact the bariatric team as soon as possible for advice.

Reflux

Avoid eating late at night and wait at least 2 hours after eating before going to bed. The balloon tends to move up when you lie down and could cause reflux.

If you have reflux:

- avoid coffee, tea and alcohol
- stop smoking
- raise the head of the bed when sleeping
- if you notice that certain foods make the symptoms worse such as tomatoes, pickles, oranges, avoid these foods.

Constipation

Following any change in diet, constipation can become a problem and is usually the result of:

- poor fluid intake – fluids help to keep poos softer
- not enough fibre in your diet – fibre gives bulk to poo
- lack of activity – movement helps bowel stimulation

Good intake of fluid and fibre along with regular exercise will help prevent constipation.

Fibre rich foods include:

- wholegrain bread
- wholegrain cereals – Weetabix, Shredded wheat, bran flakes, porridge
- fruits and vegetables
- nuts and pulses.

Despite following the above, some people still need laxatives. We recommend the use of daily Lactulose or Movicol which are available from your GP. Contact the bariatric team if you still struggle when going to the toilet with the use of laxatives or have any questions.

Smelly breath

This can be because food becomes trapped around the balloon or has stuck to it. Drink water 30 minutes before and after eating to help clear the balloon and stop the smell. Sucking on ice cubes 30 minutes after eating can also be effective.

General advice

Learn to stop eating as soon as you feel satisfied.

It is important to listen to your body's signals when it's satisfied. It is sometimes a sensation that some people rarely recognise, even after weight loss surgery. If this is you, then we suggest you concentrate on portion size alone, and stop when you have finished the food on your small plate.

Focus on how long it takes until you feel hungry again, rather than if you feel satisfied.

Change your eating habits

In order for you to lose weight with the balloon, you need to think of it as a tool to help you reassess and make changes to your eating habits. These issues will be discussed in more detail in the follow up appointments with the bariatric dietitians.

Use the 20-20-20 wait a minute rule

- Mouthfuls should be the size of a 20p (cut food up small and use small cutlery to help achieve this).
- Mouthfuls should be chewed at least 20 times (foods should resemble a liquid consistency before swallowed).
- A meal should take 20 minutes.
- Wait a minute between each mouthful.

This strategy helps you to slow down and encourages mindful eating, giving you time to recognise how your body is feeling after eating helping to avoid over eating.

Drink enough fluids

Aim to drink at least 1.5 litres of fluid per day.

Avoid eating and drinking at the same time, as this causes you to become full on the fluid and prevents you getting sufficient nutrition.

Drink 30 minutes before and after eating to reduce this risk, and to wash the balloon. Not washing the balloon can result in food sticking to the balloon, where it will ferment and result in associated unpleasant symptoms such as bad breath.

Keep exercising

To help with your weight loss, incorporate some activity into your daily routine. Start exercising as soon as you feel well after the balloon insertion. This is usually about one week after the procedure.

Will I need to attend a follow up appointment?

While the balloon is in place we recommend a regular follow up with the bariatric dietitians for support and advice. This will be booked in after the balloon has been placed.

How is the Allurion balloon removed?

After approximately 16 weeks inside your stomach, a time activated release valve on the balloon will open, allowing it to empty and pass naturally through the gastrointestinal tract into your poo without the need for a removal procedure.

At this point you may feel abdominal cramps and so we recommend that at week 15 you revert back to a soft diet and followed by a liquid diet in the 16th week only if you experience cramps.

Light exercise during this time (for example walking and cycling) helps the gut movement and can aid the passage of the balloon.

If you feel intense pain rather than cramps then call the bariatric team and if out of hours, you should attend your local A&E.

You may or may not see the balloon in your poo and may experience diarrhoea. In rare cases, the Allurion balloon may require endoscopic or surgical intervention for removal.

Who will be involved in my care?

You will see the bariatric dietitians at Musgrove Park Hospital after your procedure. If you have been referred from outside of the area, your care may be handed back to your local dietitian after your first review at Musgrove. The bariatric surgeon or specialist nurse may be involved if there are any concerns.

Notes



Contact details

Bariatric dietitians

01823 343 394

Monday to Friday 8.30am to 4.30pm

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www.somersetft.nhs.uk

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