

Balloon Benefits



Priti Patel had spent years yo-yo dieting and thanks to a busy and stressful job she found it impossible to do regular exercise and stick to a sensible diet. She decided to have the gastric balloon procedure so she could start to feel confident about herself again. This is her story...

Priti's diary

15 May 2008

So today's the day.

I'm not even nervous. I just want it done so that I can start to look good for the summer.

At the hospital there is another person waiting to see the surgeon, Professor Nadey Hakim, and I ask her what she's having done. She tells me she

The Surgeon

Professor Nadey Hakim is a General, Bariatric and Transplant Surgeon and Surgical Director of West London Transplant Unit at Hammersmith Hospital. Professor Hakim has performed more gastric band & balloon procedures than any other surgeon in the UK. Court House Clinics refer their obesity and weight loss clients to him.

What advantages do you think the gastric balloon has over other weight loss treatments?

The simplicity of the procedure is the most important element. The fact that it is done under local anaesthetic and that it does not require any cutting makes it very attractive indeed.

Are there specific patients

that it is more suited for?

Patients with a BMI of 35 and below who are not strictly speaking eligible for a gastric lap band are the ideal candidates. In addition, patients who have a very high BMI and would be high risk patients for surgery benefit from this procedure so that they can lose enough weight to make them safer candidates for a general anaesthetic.

It is obviously a much less drastic option in weight loss surgery which is why it will be attractive to many patients. How does it differ in terms of results?

The success rate of the gastric balloon is around 85%. The BIB treatment programme that also incorporates nutrition and

lifestyle advice will allow the patient to have a better chance of adopting the lifestyle changes needed to lose weight.

Why is the balloon removed after six months? Is it not possible to have the balloon as a permanent weight loss solution?

The advisable period is six months. Having said that I frequently leave them for seven or eight months. I once had a patient who forgot about it for 22 months and had no problems.

Is it possible to repeat the procedure or is this a one-off treatment?

Of course it is possible to repeat the procedure and I have done it many times.

has lost five stone with the gastric balloon programme. This convinces me I am doing the right thing.

The nerves finally kick in as I'm being taken into the operating theatre but after about a few minutes on the table the sedative kicks in and the next thing I remember is waking up and thinking I don't feel anything, did I really do it!

A sudden feeling of nausea brings me quickly back to reality. The nurse said that I can go if I can keep some water down. I take a few sips but this makes it worse. Fortunately, the nurse gives me some anti-nausea injections so that I can travel home safely.

Once I get home I go straight to sleep but I find that if turn on my side I could feel the balloon move, so I lie on my back to make things more comfortable. I suffer a small bout of sickness during the night but manage to sleep quite well.

16 May 2008

I feel tired the next morning and

try to have some water, which I normally have cold, and I find I can't drink it. Instead I have some warm water and ginger which I manage to drink a mug of in a day. I also have about three spoons of jelly. This does not stay down for long.

17 May 2008

The nausea arrives in waves but is gradually getting less as time goes on and I get used to the feeling of the balloon inside me. I have even given it a pet name!

18 May 2008

I'm still finding it hard to drink water and I might manage a glass in a day, but I need to drink eight glasses a day in order for the balloon to float to the top of my stomach where my 'I'm full' glands are located.

I went shopping for food today, this is the first time I have ventured out of the house. I walk like an old woman; if I walk at my normal pace I feel nauseous.

20 May 2008

I start to read the diet



information; it says that I will need to eat small amounts 4–6 times a day. Eating 4–6 times a day seems a lot to me. Bad habits in the past have led me to skip meals during the day and survive on tea or coffee or sugary snacks and have a heavy meal in the evening. This type of eating pattern is not going to help with the balloon inside me!

21 May 2008

Today's the day I go back to work. I have a meeting and the journey will take over two

The Personal Trainer

Mark Rahaman, the personal trainer working with Court House Clinics to provide a fitness programme that can be followed after the gastric balloon procedure.

Are there physical limitations as a result of the procedure that you have to incorporate into the fitness programme?

There will be some physical limitations as a result of the procedure such as high impact exercise, running, side to side movements, stomach crunches, etc due to the procedure giving a feeling of fullness and

a possibility that it creates a feeling of motion sickness. Each client will receive a personalised programme based on their individual needs.

Do you find that it is possible to alter their habits permanently if they commit fully to the six month process?

Absolutely! Once the client sticks to the programme they will soon find they are achieving the results they desire and feeling the benefits physically and mentally, this will soon become part of their lifestyle.

Often a direct result of weight loss surgery is that a patient will then have other surgeries or procedures to deal with the after effects. How much is it possible to achieve in toning up loose skin with exercise alone?

A major part of my programme will include toning of the muscles due to weight training and strength work which in turn speeds up the metabolism increasing the body's ability to burn fat, improving the overall tone of the whole body. Each programme is designed to fit a client's individual needs.

The Dietician

Gill Cuffaron, a registered dietician working with Court House Clinics.

Do you have to devise a different dietary programme for a gastric balloon patient?

During the first three days following insertion clients are advised to follow a liquid diet and to wean themselves back onto solid food during the first one to two weeks. Thereafter it is important for each client to have a tailored dietary plan to suit their individual needs. This will always be centred round basic healthy eating guidelines.

Some clients may also benefit from a behavioural modification approach which concentrates

on helping them to understand why they eat the way they do and to recognise and deal with the triggers that may result in emotional or general overeating.

How much weight is it safe to lose weekly or monthly?

Clients will generally lose more weight within the first month due to the drastic changes to their normal diet experienced in the first two weeks. A safe average weight loss over six months would be 2.5–3.5Kg (5–8lbs)

Do you find that clients are drastically reducing their portions or is it snacking that is mainly affected?

Generally clients tend to reduce their portion sizes significantly, however the rate of snacking can also be reduced by experiencing a feeling of fullness between meals. It is important to avoid high calorie liquids and foods such as ice cream, sweets and chocolate.

Do you find that it is possible to alter their habits permanently if they commit fully to the six month process?

Yes, particularly if they engage fully with the follow up support that is offered and if they are committed to continuing with these lifestyle changes.

hours by train so this will be a challenge!

22 May 2008

So I have had the balloon in for a week. I think I have lost weight on my face and people are commenting that there is something different about me so something is happening!

29 May 2008

It is the end of the second week. I do look better already; I didn't think I would so soon. I am keeping to my diet each day and to be honest I look at the foods that I used to eat like a McDonald's burger and fries and I just think I couldn't eat that. Which is a good thing.

June 2008

I am still losing weight but it is slower; to date I have lost ½ stone, which is 7 lbs. I do look better and feel better for it. I eat almost normally, but in smaller portions. I have reverted back to my old ways on a couple of

occasions and as soon as I do my stomach plays up.

The other good news is that I have dropped a trouser size. I do look a lot healthier and slimmer and I am very happy that I am getting so many compliments.

I just have to realize that the balloon is in for another five months and the weight will come off slowly which is the healthiest way to lose weight and will ensure it stays off. To assist in the weight loss and to improve my fitness I have also started moderate exercise at the gym on the cross trainer.

I have also been on holiday and it has been a fabulous experience. I packed information on the balloon in my suitcase in many different languages, just in case of a problem on the flight or when I was abroad. I also have a card that says I have a gastric balloon in case of medical emergency.

On holiday I was far more careful with my diet than I would

have been before the balloon. I felt really confident about my body and much healthier. I swam in the sea and did some walking.

July 2008

Since I have been back from holiday I have had lots of compliments on my appearance which has boosted my confidence. I have started to swim on Saturday mornings and try to use the cross trainer at least twice a week.

My diet is going very well; every time I want to eat something bad, I think of all I have gone through to get to this point.

CSM^{UK}

Treatment: Gastric Balloon

Price: From £4,750

Time Taken: From £4,750

Anaesthetic type: Local, mild sedative

Hospital stay: None

Available from: Court House Clinics, 0845 555 5050, www.courthouseclinics.co.uk