

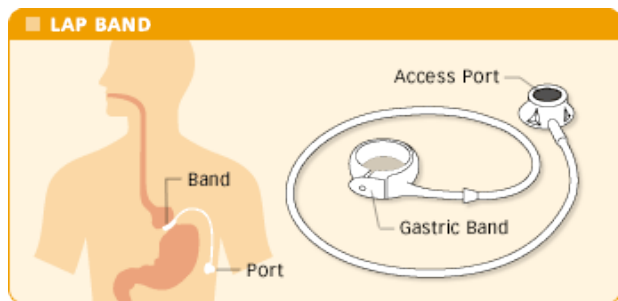
Use of the LAP-BAND®

Eric Frattura, Biomedical Engineering Program University of Rhode Island

Obesity is common epidemic in the United States. It “is the second leading cause of preventable death...” and about “127 million people are overweight and about 60 million are obese”. This is a topic in need for research to help individuals succeed at losing weight. Allergan, Inc, a company from California owns the rights to a new device called the LAP-BAND®.

This device is essentially a ring that wraps around the opening of the stomach to limit food intake. The ring contains a balloon, which, by adding or removing saline solution through an access point on the abdomen, can adjust its diameter, which further limits food intake. The LAP-BAND® procedure is also extremely non invasive.

The procedure uses small instruments and small incisions to reduce the risk of scars. They start by making these small incisions and then use laparoscope (small camera) to find the band’s proper placement. “The Lap-Band is placed around the top of the stomach and secured in place with sutures. The port is then placed underneath the skin on the top part of the abdomen. Surgery should take only about an hour, and an overnight stay in the hospital may or may not be required.”



The LAP-BAND® system is said to be revolutionary to fighting obesity because of its simplistic surgery and its ability to adjust to the body, or even be removed. On average patients can lose 50%-60% of their excess body weight. There are certain restrictions to the surgery due to the fact that this procedure is surgery and all proper precautions need to be taken. The patients BMI (Body Mass Index) has to be above or around 35 to be eligible for the surgery. The reason why this surgery hasn't been popularized is because most insurance companies do not cover the procedure. “The cost of Lap-Band surgery varies from about \$17,000 to \$30,000, depending on where you live.

As insurance companies realize the obesity epidemic, more and more are starting to pitch in for hospital costs.

There are many success stories out on the Internet that are very touching and personal. For example a woman named Sherri tells her story of how obesity affected her. She had noticed her obesity around age 10 and ever since had tried countless diets, trends, and pills. Her weight had fluctuated anywhere from 379.9 to 175. At her lowest point she was taking 30 pills per day. As of 2006 she is down to 210lb and continues to lose weight. After her progress she has had additional surgeries to remove excess skin and had body lifts.



(Here is Sherri starting at 379lb, down to 207lb)

There are many risks that should be considered before choosing this particular type of surgery. Side effects include nausea, vomiting, band slippage, and stoma obstruction. It also includes all risks involving surgery because anesthetics are used. For more information on the LAP-BAND® please visit <http://www.lapband.com>

<http://slamflat.homestead.com/Home.html>

<http://www.yourplasticsurgeryguide.com/bariatric/lap-banding.htm#risk>

<http://www.lapband.com/lapband/portal.do>