

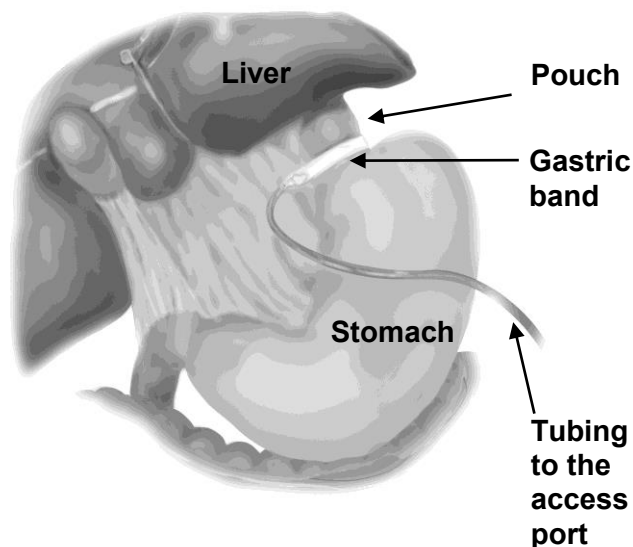
# Bariatric Surgery: Gastric Band

## How is it done?

A surgeon makes several small openings in the abdomen to place the laparoscopic (surgical) tools. A gastric band is inserted through one of the openings and wrapped around the upper part of the stomach. This makes a small pouch the size of an egg or golf ball (2–3 tablespoons or 30–50 mL).

The gastric band is then closed, creating a ring shape with a narrow opening. The opening is up to 10 millimetres across, or about the size of a dime.

The gastric band has a tube that connects to an access port attached to muscle just under your skin. Salt water (saline) can be added or removed from the port with a special needle. Adding or taking away fluid is called a “fill”. A fill makes the band tighter or looser. The tighter the band is, the smaller the opening to the stomach is.



CAMIS, 2009

## How does it work?

The small pouch limits the amount of food you can eat at one time to about ½–1 cup (125–250 mL). You will feel full eating smaller portions. When you eat less food, you may take in fewer calories, which will help you lose weight.

The small opening of the pouch slows down the movement of food and drinks into your stomach. This may help you feel full longer.

There are no changes to the rest of the stomach or intestine, so your body will digest food and absorb the nutrients from food as usual.

## What are the risks or side effects?

- If you eat more than the pouch can hold, you will feel uncomfortable. You may feel nauseated and vomit.
- If the band is too tight, you will not be able to drink or eat. You will start to vomit and can even become dehydrated.
- There is a risk of the band slipping up or down, or even wearing away into the stomach.
- Leaks can develop from the band, tubing, or port. If the leak is from the band or tube, you will need surgery. If the leak is from the port, you can have the repair done as an outpatient.
- You may be at risk for low levels of vitamins and minerals. Your healthcare team will talk to you about what supplements you need and how often to have your blood tested.
- You may take in extra calories and gain weight if you:
  - choose high-calorie foods.
  - eat too often.
  - choose very soft or liquid food and drinks that pass through the band easily.