

Considering Plastic Surgery after LAP-BAND[®]?

It's not uncommon to lose a lot of weight and find your skin hasn't tightened as much as you'd like. Here's help to decide if plastic surgery could be right for you.

Katie Sullivan can't remember a time when she didn't play tennis. "It was always a huge part of my life," she says. She began competing at the age of 10 and attended college on a tennis scholarship. Even after graduation, she coached kids in tennis while working on her master's degree.

But somewhere along the way, she hit a bump in the road, and the slender, six-foot-tall athlete began packing on some pounds. A combination of family problems and pregnancy triggered a cycle of compulsive overeating, and before she knew it, she was too big to hit the courts. "I didn't play tennis for five years," Sullivan recalls, "and I really missed it."

In 2006, she'd had enough: Sullivan underwent Lap-Band[®] Adjustable Gastric Banding System surgery. She lost enough weight to look and feel better, but extra skin around her stomach and heavy breasts were still making playing tennis a challenge. So she had a tummy tuck in 2008 and a breast reduction two years later. "Without a doubt, those surgeries enabled me to play again," says Sullivan, a 42-year-old mom of two. "I wasn't carrying around all that extra baggage, so I could get back into the game."

If you've lost a lot of weight with your Lap-Band[®] System, you may be considering plastic surgery, too. Here are some common questions—and expert answers—to help you decide if it's right for you.

After weight loss, will I have saggy skin?

Not necessarily—everyone's body is a bit different. It's best to wait until you've gotten to your goal weight to see how your skin responds. At that point, you'll have a better idea of how cosmetic surgery could benefit you.

Why doesn't skin just bounce back?

"Think of your skin as a rubber band," suggests Christopher Davidson, MD, a plastic surgeon in Boston. "You may have gained and lost weight many times throughout your life. If you stretch a rubber band a lot, at some point, the elasticity is gone and it won't recoil anymore."

Will exercise tone up my skin?

Unfortunately, no. It will tone your muscles, make you stronger, and may even give you the appearance of tightness, but exercise can't fix sagging skin.

How do I decide if cosmetic surgery is for me?

First, insists Dr. Davidson, have realistic expectations: Cosmetic surgery won't make you look like Angelina Jolie, but it will make you look and feel better. "If you've lost at least 75 pounds," he says, "you may be a candidate for cosmetic surgery. And the healthier you are, the better the outcome is likely to be."

What are the most common procedures people choose?

At the top of the list: tummy tuck; lower-body lift; breast uplift, augmentation, or reduction; inner-thigh shaping; and upper-arm shaping.

When can I schedule cosmetic surgery?

You should wait at least 18 months following Lap-Band[®] System surgery. Your weight should be stable—no large gains or losses—for about four months.

How difficult is it?

“Don’t take this lightly,” advises Dr. Davidson. “All the usual surgical risks apply—from bleeding to infection to problems with wound healing. Those things are rare, but you should know about them going in.” Recovery time depends on the procedure, varying from one to three weeks.

Will my insurance pay for it?

That depends. If it’s medically necessary—say, you have infected sores, or excess skin makes it difficult to walk—many insurance companies will pick up the tab. Speak with your insurance rep and your surgeon’s office. “For those patients who receive a denial from their insurance companies, my advice is always to appeal, appeal, and appeal,” says Dr. Davidson.

How do I find a good surgeon?

You can go to www.plasticsurgery.org to find a plastic surgeon in your area. It’s a good idea to ask your doctor and support group for recommendations. “Then ask the surgeon questions,” says Dr. Davidson. “Start with asking how long the surgeon has been working with weight-loss patients. The number of surgeries performed is really important.”

Your results may vary.

Important LAP-BAND[®] Safety Information

Indications: The LAP-BAND[®] System is indicated for weight reduction for patients with obesity, with a Body Mass Index (BMI) of at least 40 kg/m² or a BMI of at least 30 kg/m² with one or more obesity related comorbid conditions.

Contraindications: The LAP-BAND[®] System is not recommended for non-adult patients, patients with conditions that may make them poor surgical candidates or increase the risk of poor results (e.g., inflammatory or cardiopulmonary diseases, GI conditions, symptoms or family history of autoimmune disease, cirrhosis) who are unwilling or unable to comply with the required dietary restrictions, who have alcohol or drug addictions or who currently are or may be pregnant.

Warnings: The LAP-BAND[®] System is a long-term implant. Explant and replacement surgery may be required. Patients who become pregnant or severely ill, or who require more extensive nutrition, may require deflation of their bands. Anti-inflammatory agents, such as aspirin, should be used with caution and may contribute to an increased risk of band erosion.

Adverse Events: Placement of the LAP-BAND[®] System is major surgery and, as with any surgery, death can occur. Possible complications include the risks associated with the medications and methods used during surgery, the risks associated with any surgical procedure and the patient’s ability to tolerate a foreign object implanted in the body.

Band slippage, erosion and deflation, reflux, obstruction of the stomach, dilation of the esophagus, infection or



nausea and vomiting may occur. Reoperation may be required.

Rapid weight loss may result in complications that may require additional surgery. Deflation of the band may alleviate excessively rapid weight loss or esophageal dilation.

Important: For full safety information, please visit www.Lapband.com, talk with your doctor or call Allergan Product Support at 1-800-624-4261.

CAUTION: Rx only.