

What Kids Need to Know About Your LAP-BAND®

Whether you have children of your own or just children you care about, it can be confusing for them to watch you on your LAP-BAND® journey. Here's help putting all the changes in terms they can understand and appreciate.

It's natural for kids to be curious about your port. They may ask why you're eating so differently. They may be concerned that you're shrinking. Kids can have a lot of questions, but they don't always ask them. So how do you know what to tell and what not to? Here's some expert advice on figuring that out.

Do what works for you.

"What's most important in this process is for you to do what's best for you and your family," says Lisa M. Steres, PhD, a licensed clinical psychologist practicing in San Diego, California, who has special expertise in preparing patients for bariatric surgery. Some people will want to share more information than others, and that's okay. Also, kids will want more information (or none) depending on their age.

Steve Braudt, 49, is a United Methodist pastor in Cedar Falls, Iowa, who specializes in youth ministry. He was 350 pounds when he had LAP-BAND® System surgery in August 2007, and the kids in his youth group (who range from sixth graders to high schoolers) have watched him drop to 195 pounds in 11 months. "They had a lot of questions. They were concerned I was doing something crazy," says Braudt, who explained to them that his surgery was necessary for health reasons. (His liver was beginning to fail due to his weight.) "Once the kids understood, they were very supportive."

When Laura King, 33, of Haslett, Michigan, had LAP-BAND® System surgery in January 2008, her boys were just tots, so she didn't really tell them anything about the surgery. In fact, the boys (now two and five years old) haven't even commented on her weight loss from 276 pounds to 168 pounds (about 15 pounds from her goal), though she does plan to tell them about the surgery when they're older.

Keep it positive.

The most important thing when talking about your surgery and your new lifestyle, says Dr. Steres, is to focus on the positive. Instead of saying "Now I can't eat as much as I did before," you can say "My LAP-BAND® helps me eat the right amount." And instead of telling them "Now I have to exercise every day," you can say "Now I have the energy to be more active." This way of thinking can help you, too. "To be successful, you have to join forces with the band...not fight it," says Dr. Steres.

Remember that it's medical.

When you talk about obesity, say that it is a medical condition that you have (or had) and that LAP-BAND® System surgery is a treatment for it. This can help change people's perception of obesity—not only your kids' perception but that of your friends and other family members, too. Say something like "I suffer from obesity, just like some people suffer from diabetes, and getting this surgery is the treatment for my condition," advises Dr. Steres.

Let them help out.

The kids from Braudt's youth group visited him in the hospital during his overnight stay and cut his lawn during his recovery. Kids (and spouses) can also help you out by eating healthier and exercising with you. King hopes that by teaching healthy habits to her sons today, they won't need the surgery in the future.

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.

It is indicated for use in adult patients who have failed more conservative weight reduction alternatives, such as supervised diet, exercise and behavior modification programs. Patients who elect to have this surgery must make the commitment to accept significant changes in their eating habits for the rest of their lives.

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.