

Swallowable gastric balloon capsule for weight loss

Information for the public

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For short-term weight loss for medical reasons, the evidence shows that this procedure works well. But it causes infrequent but potentially serious adverse events. So, it can only be used for short-term weight loss when patients are having regular checks to see if it has caused problems.

For long-term weight loss, this procedure can only be done as part of a research study. This is because there is not enough evidence to be sure how well it works or how safe it is.

In this procedure, a person who is overweight or obese swallows a capsule attached to a thin tube. The capsule contains a small inflatable balloon. Once in the stomach, the capsule dissolves and the balloon is inflated by filling it with liquid through the tube. The tube is then disconnected and pulled back up the throat and removed through the patient's mouth. The balloon stays in the stomach for around 4 months. It deflates over time and is passed out naturally through the bowel. The aim is to give a feeling of fullness and temporarily restrict the size of the stomach, leading to weight loss. This procedure must be combined with appropriate dietary and lifestyle changes.

The [NHS website](#) may be a good place to find out more. [NICE's information on interventional procedures guidance](#) has more about what a procedure is and how we assess them.

Is this procedure right for me?

If you've been offered this procedure, your healthcare professionals should discuss with you what is involved, and explain the research study, and tell you about the risks and benefits. They should talk with you about your options, and listen carefully to your views and concerns. Your family can be involved too, if you wish. All of this should happen before you agree (consent) to have the procedure and to be in the study. You should also be told how to find more information about the procedure. Read more about [making decisions about your care](#).

Some questions to think about

- What does the procedure involve?
- What are the possible benefits? How likely am I to get them?
- What are the risks or side effects? How likely are they?
- What happens if the procedure doesn't work or something goes wrong?
- What happens if I don't want the procedure? Are there other treatments available?

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