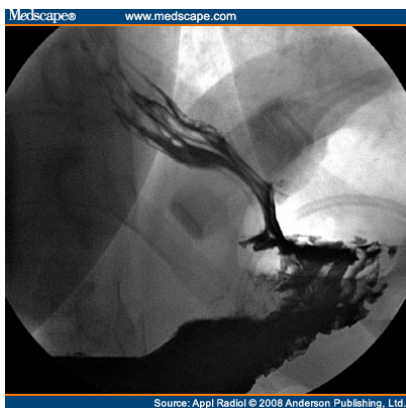


The Red Zone

Images of barium swallows below:

Normal Barium swallow



This is a correctly positioned band with a normal size upper stomach pouch. Note the Barium runs easily through the band and band is on a 45 degree angle, which is how it should be.

Oesophageal dilatation



Note the extended size of the oesophagus compared with the normal Barium swallow image. Often causes regurgitation and reduced satiety, however prevents us from further inflating the band. This band is extremely tight and you will notice the inability of Barium to flow through the band, encouraging the oesophagus to dilate as it backs up.

Everybody who has a band understands the Green Zone diagram, and how it should be used to assist both you and us in determining your ideal fill volume in order to achieve your weight loss goal. The ideal volume is intended to achieve two effects – satiety (not hungry) and satiation (satisfied after eating).

However the ideal volume can only be realised if and when you are following the eating and behavioural guidelines we set to enable this to happen effectively and without consequence (follow the prompts around the perimeter of the plate). When in the Green Zone, episodes of obstruction and regurgitation are extremely rare. It is important to remember (again) that the gastric band is a tool to help you lose weight, and you have to stay committed to get the results you want.

There is often a misconception that if you are in the Red Zone you will *lose* more weight. This may be true for a short while, but in time people can actually gain weight. Living in the Red Zone increases your risk of complications. It increases the number of times you regurgitate (bring food up) because eating solid food becomes more difficult. If you are regurgitating regularly (say 3 times a week or more), it is likely that you are in the Red Zone. Regurgitating regularly increases the risk of a gastric pouch dilatation, band slippage, lower esophageal dilatation, all diagnosed through radiological examination. These complications usually lead to a revision operation. Night cough can also develop and this can lead to pneumonia and chest infection.

To diagnose any problems with gastric bands, we use a specialized radiological procedure that involves swallowing a radio-opaque liquid (Barium) and taking X-rays as the barium flows through the gullet. The gastric band itself is radio-opaque (meaning NOT transparent to X-rays) so we can identify the position of the band and therefore determine flow and any hold-ups in the flow of Barium travelling through the system. As the Barium lines the stomach, it will also identify the size of the stomach pouch and any associated enlargements.

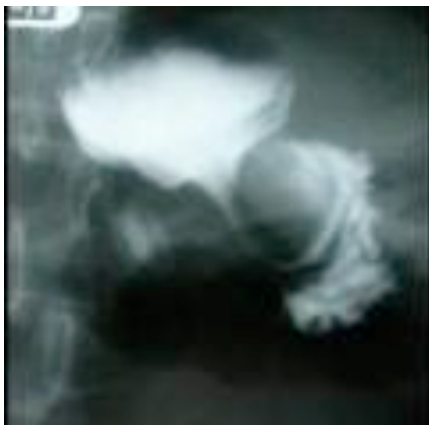
The Red Zone often results in making poor food choices as quality proteins and leafy green veggies become harder to eat. They are difficult to chew well enough to get through the gastric band. People often resort to “slider foods” such as biscuits, ice cream, chocolate, chips and lollies, which are easier to eat, (because they slide easily through a band). This often leads to weight gain. If you are regurgitating, choosing ‘easy’ foods or regularly getting food stuck, we strongly recommend that you come back for a follow-up assessment to discuss the benefits of a deflation. This will enable

Gastric band slippage



Much of the stomach is above the band. This causes most of the Red Zone symptoms, including an inability to eat solids, and often difficulty with even fluids. Occurs generally after consistent regurgitations over time. This requires urgent revision surgery to prevent stomach necrosis (death of stomach tissue). Note: this is one of our patient's x-rays!

Symmetrical gastric pouch dilatation



"Muffin top" over band, and causes Red Zone symptoms. Usually caused by excessive regurgitation. Too much stomach above band, causes band to become more horizontal and if can't be conservatively treated will need revision surgery to correct

you to eat properly. A deflation in the Red Zone can often help to start weight loss, as you are able to eat healthy proteins again, naturally reducing hunger. This will also improve your quality of life.

The Red Zone: You need to reduce the volume if:

- You find eating solid foods difficult, and you prefer softer or liquid foods.
- You feel many foods "stick," creating a tightness in the lower chest.
- You may experience heartburn, acid reflux and/or vomiting.
- You may be gaining weight because you're making poor food choices.

Bottom line, one of the most important things you can remember is: More fluid in the band is not necessarily better. What IS important is finding and staying in the Green Zone. Coming in to your follow-up appointments will help you get there, stay there, and achieve your weight loss goals as quickly and comfortably as possible.

If you feel like you are in the Red Zone, or even bordering on the Red Zone, then you need to come and see us to discuss this for a potential deflation. It is coming up to Christmas and the holiday break where there is limited access to either clinic for adjustment to your band. If you are close to the Red Zone you will need to work extra hard over the holidays to ensure you follow the eating behavioural guidelines, and don't end up with an obstruction requiring an urgent deflation.

The offices will be closed over the Christmas break, and do not re-open until Monday January 16, 2012. During this time, in an emergency, you may contact Andrea on her mobile phone 027 280 0049 and she will do her best to arrange someone to see you. From Christmas Eve until January 2nd, there will be very limited staff available in both Hamilton and Wellington, and if a deflation is required, it will most likely be an inexperienced General Practitioner or someone within the public system who will likely be totally unfamiliar with bands. Please work with your bands, be careful and most importantly enjoy your time-off over the break!

Try to make the day about family and friends and fun and NOT about food!

Merry Christmas and Happy New Year from the teams at Surgical Obesity Service (Hamilton and Wellington)