

How Men Can Win At Losing

LAP-BAND[®] surgery isn't just for women, but sometimes men can feel at a loss for support. Here are some strategies men can use to achieve their post-op goals.

Everywhere you look you see weight loss programs dedicated to women. *Fit into that summer dress...Lean on other women as you lose weight together...* But men are also struggling with weight and need both support and encouragement if their LAP-BAND[®] surgery is to be successful.

You're Not Alone (You Just Feel That Way)

John Dixon, MD, head of the Obesity Research Unit at Monash University, pinpoints the problem in his estimation that 75-85% of LAP-BAND[®] patients are women. "Men need to know that open communication isn't a sign of weakness, it's the only way to make this surgery work," he says. Dixon highly recommends men find support groups, even if they have to turn to online forums. "It may help in case there aren't enough male LAP-BAND[®] patients in their area," he says. "They may also like being anonymous."

Somebody Get Me A Doctor

Kevin Bessette of Fairfield, Connecticut, went the online route but believes, like Dixon, that men need doctors involved in their life to figure out what information is accurate. He even went so far as to work at a bariatrics center as an office manager to accomplish this goal. "I talk to my doctor every other day," he says. "Though you don't need to go as far as that, the more you talk to them, the more comfortable you'll feel asking important questions."

Friendly Persuasion

Still, the real problem may come from an unexpected support group—your friends. "Men sometimes go off the diet when they're having steaks with the guys," Dixon says. "They don't want to be seen as not participating. This is a particularly bad idea when you haven't tried a food out before. You don't want to be stuck in the bathroom trying to work through a blockage."

Partner In Crime

Another area to look at is your significant other. Because men aren't as likely to be the food buyer and preparer, it's important that they communicate to their partner that certain foods just won't work. "It's not just what the spouse is making," Dixon says. "You need to help them understand the portion size you can cope with."

Healthy Reasoning

Finally, Besette reminds that communicating with the people in your life, even when it feels awkward, is for their benefit also. After all, they want you around for a long time. As a 26-year-old who once weighed 275 pounds and had hypertension and cholesterol issues, it's a much different world for Besette now that his scale reads 155. "It's terrific to look great," he says, "but knowing I'm healthy, that's what really matters."