



THE INCREDIBLE LIGHTNESS OF BEING

If you're feeling deflated after several failed attempts at losing weight, the latest non-invasive procedure at **G&L SURGICAL CLINIC** may just be the solution

Months before their big day, brides-to-be start looking for that perfect dress, locking down their preferred wedding venue, and finalising their favourite hair and make-up look. Perhaps most challenging in their quest to look perfect? Dropping excess weight—and keeping it off.

As the wedding draws nearer, it gets even harder to achieve sustained weight loss. One popular quick fix is juice fasts but, as with most crash diets, you may end up piling on kilos as quickly as you lose them.

Addressing this concern, Dr Ganesh Ramalingam (pictured below right), general surgeon at G&L Surgical Clinic, recommends his clinic's latest procedure. Using cutting-edge bariatric technology, it involves inserting a small silicon balloon into the patient's mouth, down the oesophagus into the stomach while they are sedated. During the 15-minute procedure, the balloon is inflated with a sterile saline solution via a long, hollow tube. When the inflated balloon is in place, it creates a feeling of fullness, thus limiting the amount of food the patient eats and, in turn, resulting in weight loss. Approved by the US FDA in 2015, this procedure is suitable for patients with a Body Mass Index of 30 to 40, who are unable to lose weight through dieting and exercise.

SIMPLE, SAFE, SCAR-FREE

Unlike bariatric surgeries, which involve invasive procedures to reduce the stomach size, the insertion of the intra gastric balloon is a non-surgical process—there are no incisions, stitches or scars. “Young brides-to-be prefer this technique over bariatric surgery as it is safe and non-invasive,” says Dr Ganesh, who performs around 15 such



procedures a month on brides-to-be. “You may wake up from the procedure feeling groggy for a few hours since it involves sleep induction, and you may experience nausea over the next three days, but there is no pain.”

Following implantation, three days of sedentary activity is advised, after which patients can exercise and resume other physically-demanding activities. No after-care is needed, and there will be monthly follow-up consultations to check that everything is in order and to monitor the patient's weight-loss pattern. If you are worried that the balloon will rupture in the body, Dr Ganesh says that the risk of this is very low. Furthermore, the balloon does not stay in the stomach forever. After six months, it is drained via gastroscopy and removed.

QUICK, LASTING RESULTS

For the first week after having the intra gastric balloon inserted, patients follow a liquid diet to allow the stomach to adjust to the presence of the balloon. After this, soft foods such as porridge

and purees can be added to the diet in small amounts. From the third week onwards, they can resume a normal, healthy diet that is low in fat, sugar and carbohydrates. Over this time, the balloon, by filling up space in the stomach, would have reduced their appetite. Patients feel full sooner and thus eat less without intentionally trying to. Dr Ganesh observes that most patients lose 5kg to 7kg during this period and, over the course of a year, lose around 15 per cent of their body weight—this is thrice the weight lost through regular dieting and exercise.

When should one undergo the procedure? It is up to their discretion but six months before a big event, such as a wedding or pre-wedding photo shoot, is common. Brides-to-be, particularly those who have previously attempted traditional weight-loss methods with little success, are most impressed by the drastic weight drop observed. Having said that, Dr Ganesh underlines that long-term success of the intra gastric balloon procedure is



only guaranteed with a healthy and active lifestyle. “With a strong support team, patients develop healthy habits such as portion control and an active lifestyle during the first six months. These effects stay with them for life.” ■

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