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ARTICLE ON LAPAROSCOPIC
GASTRIC BANDING FOR
MORBID OBESITY

HOW SHE LOST A WHOPPING 50 KG

Two years ago, when her weight hit an all-time high of 113kg, she knew she was in big trouble.

"I was worried for my health. I didn't want to get all the weight-related illnesses like diabetes and kidney problems, high blood pressure and so on," she said.

By that time, no amount of dieting could bring her weight down.

"I was so desperate, I thought of going for the stomach-stapling operation which would make my stomach very small and leave a big scar on my chest and abdomen," she said.

But the doctor whom she trusted and who was going to operate on her, was migrating to the US.

"He could not offer me the follow-up care, so that operation was off," she said.

That turned out to be quite a good thing in the end because it gave her time to find out about lap-band surgery, which is a keyhole operation. It does not leave any big scars and is reversible.

"When I read about it in the papers, I thought 'This is my cup of tea'," she said.



Can lose half excess weight

MADAM Tin Tin Myint was referred to Dr Haridas Baladas, a consultant surgeon at Alexandra Hospital (AH).

He is one of the consultants at the weight-management programme there and performs lap-band surgery for suitable patients with morbid obesity.

A morbidly obese person has a body mass index (BMI, which is one's weight in kilos divided by the square of one's height in metres) of 40 and above. Madam Tin Tin's BMI was slightly over 50.

During the surgery, a silicon-filled band is placed around the stomach, dividing it into two parts.

"The upper pouch can only hold a small amount of food. The rest of the stomach lies below the band, connected by a small opening created by the band. The upper pouch will empty more slowly, which means you will feel full," said Dr Baladas.

Since AH's weight loss programme started in 2000, doctors there have seen nearly 1,000 overweight patients. Dr Baladas has operated on 21 obese patients since 2000, aged from 23 to 62.

"A lot also depends on the patient's motivation to exercise. Madam Tin Tin is one of our most motivated cases," he said.

Story by Ng Wan Ching