

# Cholecystectomy

*... after the procedure*

## About My Procedure

Cholecystectomy is the surgical removal of the gallbladder. The operation is done to remove the gallbladder due to gallstones, inflammation or a diseased gallbladder that is causing pain or infection.

The gallbladder can be removed in a variety of ways, depending on what your doctor feels best meets your needs.

- Laparoscopic cholecystectomy or robotic laparoscopic cholecystectomy—the gallbladder is removed with instruments placed into small incisions in the abdomen.
- Open cholecystectomy—the gallbladder is removed through a larger incision on the right side, under the ribcage. This is usually done if laparoscopic means prove unsuccessful.

## Medications

- A prescription for pain medication will be given to you upon dismissal. Please use the medication as needed, and as prescribed.

## Follow-up Appointment

- You will need to see your doctor in the office 7-10 days after surgery. You are responsible for making your own appointment.

## Your Recovery

- If you do not have complications, you usually will go home the same day after your procedure.
- You may stay overnight if you have an open removal of the gallbladder.
- You may feel tired following the procedure. Plan on going home to rest after your procedure to recuperate and heal in your recliner or bed.

## Nutrition

- When you wake up from anesthesia, you will be able to drink small amounts of liquid. If you do not feel sick, you can begin eating within a few hours after surgery. Start your diet with liquids working your way back to a normal diet as tolerated. It is a good idea to stay away from rich, greasy, fatty, or spicy foods for a few days.
- If you do not experience any nausea or vomiting you can usually return to a normal diet within a few days.

## Bowel Movements

- Anesthesia, decreased activity, and pain medications can contribute to constipation. Avoid straining with bowel movements by increasing the fiber in your diet and or use of over the counter stool softeners. Be sure you are drinking 8-10 glasses of fluid each day (unless you are on fluid restriction).



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## Activity

- Slowly increase your activity. Be sure to get up and walk every hour or so during the daytime to prevent blood clot formation.
- You may usually return to work 1 week after laparoscopic surgery as long as you don't do any heavy lifting. Your doctor will inform you of any longer restrictions should they apply.
- Do not lift items heavier than 15 pounds or participate in strenuous activity for at least 6 weeks.
- No driving for 48 hours.
- Take it easy while you recover. Pain is your body's way of telling you to rest an injured area. If you are experiencing pain with certain activity limit or stop that activity until your body heals.

## Wound Care

- Apply ice to your abdomen for the first 24hrs. (20-30 minutes at a time)
- Always wash your hands before and after touching near your incision site.
- Clean your incisions daily using antibacterial soap and water.
- You may take a shower and rinse off the incision, starting tomorrow.
- Do not soak in a bathtub or pool until your incisions are completely healed.
- If you have a glue-like covering over the incision, just allow the glue to flake off on its own. Do not pick at the glue.
- If you have steri-strips in place, they will generally fall off in 7-10 days or your doctor may remove them at your follow-up visit.
- A small amount of drainage from the incision site can be normal. To protect your clothing, you can cover the site with gauze dressing if needed. This should resolve in 2-3 days.
- Despite the greatest care, any incision can become infected. Contact your physician immediately if you run a fever, if your incision becomes more painful rather than less painful as days go by, becomes swollen, reddened, shows pus or red streaks.

## WHEN TO CALL YOUR DOCTOR

Call your doctor immediately if you have any of the following:

- Yellowing of your eyes or skin (jaundice)
- Chills
- Fever above 101.5°F or 38.5°C
- Redness, swelling, increasing pain, pus, or a foul smell at the incision site
- Dark or rust-colored urine
- Stool that is clay-colored or light in color instead of brown, or black or bloody
- Increasing abdominal pain and it is swollen or hard.
- If you feel short of breath and or have chest pains.
- Vomiting that is not relieved with medication.