



# Laparoscopic Cholecystectomy Post-op Instructions

## Diet

- Start with clear liquids today to prevent nausea, vomiting and constipation, (soup, Jell-O, juices, popsicles, and carbonated beverages.) then advance to a regular low fat diet.
- Eat smaller meals more often instead of fewer larger meals.
- You can eat a normal diet, but avoid eating fatty food for about one (1) month. Fatty foods include hamburgers, whole milk, cheese and many snack foods. If your stomach is upset, try bland, low-fat foods like plain rice, broiled chicken, toast and yogurt.
- Drink plenty of fluids (unless your doctor tells you not to).
- If you have diarrhea, try avoiding spicy foods, dairy products, fatty foods and alcohol. If the diarrhea continues for more than 2 weeks, talk to your doctor.
- Eat lots of whole grains, fruits, green leafy vegetables. Avoid foods that cause constipation such as dairy products, red meat, processed foods such as pizza, frozen dinners, pasta, and sugar products such as cakes, pies, pastries, doughnuts and drinks containing caffeine.

## Medication

- Take pain medications as prescribed by your doctor. Take your pain medication with crackers or toast.
- Take stool softener as prescribed by your doctor. \_\_\_\_\_
- Take antibiotics as ordered if prescribed by your doctor \_\_\_\_\_

## Activity

- Rest for the next 24 hours.
- No strenuous activity for two weeks.
- No heavy lifting for two (2) weeks.

## Dressing

- There will be 4 to 5 small incisions in the abdominal area. Your incisions will be closed with skin clips or sutures as determined by your surgeon. Dressings will cover your incisions.
- Keep your dressings clean and dry for 48 hours.
- You may remove your outer dressing in 48 hours. After you have removed your dressing, you may cover your incisions with Band-Aids or leave them open to air, which ever is more comfortable for you.
- You may shower after you remove your dressing.
- If you have steri strips (thin strips of white tape), leave them in place until they fall off on their own in about 10 days.
- If you have skin glue, a Topical Skin Adhesive, this will naturally slough off your skin in 5-10 days. Do not rub, scratch, or pick at skin glue. Do not apply any medications on any products to wound while skin glue is in place. You may shower only, after 24 hrs.



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### Bathing

- You may shower tomorrow if you have skin glue or after 48 hours when dressings are removed.
- No bathing, immersion or swimming for at least two (2) weeks.

### What to Expect

- It is common to experience: Right shoulder discomfort, chest tightness, bilateral shoulder discomfort for 24 to 48 hours after surgery, gradually this will go away. It is caused by carbon dioxide used to inflate your abdomen during the procedure. Carbon dioxide is a gas, and like all gases, travels upwards, settling on your chest and shoulders.
- Soreness in the abdominal area similar to an ache you would feel after starting a new exercise program involving your abdominal muscles. This ache will gradually go away within a few days.
- Your abdomen may be distended for a few days after surgery.
- There may be a large black or blue area (bruise), on your abdomen to your hip. This may appear within the first week after surgery. It is caused by blood pooling under the skin from your surgery. Your body will reabsorb this blood over time. The bruise will turn yellow and disappear in time.
- You may feel sleepy, rest for the first 24 hours.
- You may have some nausea or vomiting the day of surgery, but this should not persist beyond the day AFTER surgery.
- You may have a sore throat, if you received general anesthesia
- It may take a few days before you have a bowel movement. Bowel irregularity is expected with pain medication. Take stool softener as ordered for constipation. You may also experience diarrhea, especially if eating foods high in fat. This should gradually resolve, allowing your diet to return to normal.

### Sterile Suction Drain (JP Drain)

- If your gallbladder was infected, your surgeon will insert a tube in the incision to drain fluid out of the surgical site. The tube will have a bulb-like device at the end of the tube to collect the fluid. When you return for a postoperative visit your surgeon will remove the drain.

### How to Empty the Sterile Suction Drain:

- Before and after you empty the drain reservoir wash your hands well with soap and running water. Pay special attention to rubbing your fingers, fingernails and the backs of your hands. Hand washing is an important step to help prevent infection.
- Empty your drain reservoir when you get up in the morning and before you go to bed at night.
- Pour the contents of the reservoir into the measuring cup, record the amount of drainage. Bring this record to your next visit with your surgeon.
- Squeeze the sides of the reservoir to remove all air. Reinsert the cap. The drain works properly only when the sides are flattened and a light suction is created.
- Pin the reservoirs to your clothing to prevent pulling on the tubing.



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## Miscellaneous

- No alcohol or driving for 24 hours after surgery or while taking pain medicine.
- Do not make any personal or business decisions for 24 hours.
- You should have a responsible adult with you for the rest of the day and night.

## Possible Problems

Call your surgeon if:

- Unable to drink liquids in the morning because of nausea.
- Unable to urinate eight hours after your surgery.
- Your temperature is greater than 101.5 degrees F.
- You notice excessive bleeding or unexpected drainage from the wound site.
- You notice extreme redness or warmth around your incision sites.
- You notice wound edges open or separate.
- Your pain is not relieved by pain medication.

Call your surgeon if you have any of the following symptoms:	When it Might Occur	Possible Cause
Severe right upper abdominal pain	Within 48 hours	Retained common bile duct stone, or post-op pain from muscle injury
Right upper abdominal pain increasing over time	Hours to days after the procedure	Delayed bleeding or bile leak
Right upper abdominal pain with or after eating. Yellow discoloration of skin or eyes (jaundice)	May occur weeks later	Gallstones in common duct
Temperature > 101.5 degrees F	Within two weeks	Infection within the abdomen or in one of the incisions



# Laparoscopic Cholecystectomy Post-op Instructions

## Telephone numbers to call with Problems or Questions

### Surgery Clinic: Department 286

Mon – Fri, 8:30 a.m. to 5 p.m.  
(408) 851-2000

### Medical Offices Call Center

Mon – Fri, After Business Hours, Weekends and Holidays  
(408) 554-9800

### Emergency Department

Open 24 hours  
(408) 851-5300

### Anesthesia Service Line

Open 24 hours; your call will be returned within one business day.  
(408) 851-6020

## Follow-up Appointment

Name:

Place:

Date:

Time:

Return to Work:

Medical Provider: