Laparoscopic Cholecystectomy
Post-op Instructions

Diet

- Start with clear liquids (soup, jello, juices, popsicles, carbonated beverages or water).
- Eat a light meal in the evening after surgery and then return to your normal diet.

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 prescribed by your doctor.

Activity

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

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 your appointment with your doctor.
- If you have INDERMIL, a Topical Skin Adhesive, this would naturally slough off your skin in 5-10 days. Do not rub, scratch, or pick at INDERMIL. Do not apply any medications on any products to wound while INDERMIL is in place. You may shower only, after 24 hrs. No bathing, immersion or swimming for at least 10 days.

Bathing

- Shower tomorrow

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 evolving 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 devise 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.

**Miscellaneous**

- No alcohol or driving for 24 hours 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.
- 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 100.5o 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:
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Symptom</th>
<th>When it Might Occur</th>
<th>Possible Cause</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Severe right upper abdominal pain</td>
<td>Within 48 hours</td>
<td>Retained common bile duct stone, or post-op pain from muscle injury</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Right upper abdominal pain increasing over time</td>
<td>Hours to days after the procedure</td>
<td>Delayed bleeding or bile leak</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Right upper abdominal pain with or after eating. Yellow discoloration of skin or eyes (jaundice)</td>
<td>May occur weeks later</td>
<td>Gallstones in common duct</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Temperature &gt; 101.5o F</td>
<td>Within two weeks</td>
<td>Infection within the abdomen or in one of the incisions</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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

Telephone numbers to call with Problems or Questions

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:  

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