

PATIENT INFORMATION

Laparoscopic Cholecystectomy

Discharge Advice

1. Most patients experience some pain or discomfort around the wounds and right side of the abdomen which is relieved by taking painkillers. Pain in the shoulders is common especially the right shoulder. This is caused by the gas that is used to inflate the abdomen. This usually settles within 24 hours.

You will be given painkillers to take home, it is important that you take these regularly e.g. take them with your breakfast, lunch, and dinner and before you go to bed. Please follow the instructions on the boxes and do not exceed the recommended dose. If your pain is severe (score 10) and you have taken your painkillers and the pain lasts for more than 2 hours at severe level please return to A&E so that we can examine you.

An easy way of understanding your pain score is on a scoring system called a pain ruler of 0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10. When you leave hospital it should be about 3 – 4, some patients have discomfort only.

0 = no pain ----- 10 is severe pain.

2. It is usual to feel tired following your operation, do not worry. This will gradually decrease. Build up gradually to your normal routine. Avoid heavy lifting for 4 weeks. The recovery may take longer if you have had your gallbladder removed as an emergency or had a bile duct exploration.

Returning to work will depend on your job. If your work does not involve heavy lifting, standing or walking for long periods then you may feel up to going back after 2 weeks. If your work is heavy then it is likely you will need to take 4 weeks off.

Remember everyone is different!

3. Your wounds have been closed with dissolvable stitches; they will be absorbed between 3 and 6 weeks. Glue, has also been used to close the wounds, this will form a scab over the wound. Do not scratch the scab off; it will fall off on its own. Occasionally you may have marked bruising around your wounds. Do not worry they will disappear after a couple of weeks.

Please make an appointment with your practice nurse at your doctor's surgery if you are at all worried about your wounds.

4. You may shower 24-48 hours after your surgery.

5. Do not drive until you are able to move freely without any discomfort and are safe to perform an emergency stop. Please inform your insurance company about your operation before you return to driving to avoid invalidating your insurance.

6. You can eat a normal diet. Eating healthily will help you recover faster. If you have had pancreatitis you should avoid alcohol for at least 6 months.

7. You may suffer from constipation; this is common if you are on strong painkillers. Please take a laxative e.g. Lactulose, Fybogel, or Sennakot which can be purchased from your local pharmacist. It is also possible to experience diarrhoea after removal of your gallbladder. This usually settles after a few weeks but if not please see your GP.

8. Sexual activities can be resumed as soon as you feel comfortable.

9. Please continue to take your normal medication unless otherwise advised by your health professional.

10. Some people are discharged with a drain in place. If this is the case, you will be given more information on how to look after the drain and the plan will be explained before you are discharged.

11. There is about a 5% chance of re-admission due to various causes, slightly higher after emergency cholecystectomy or bile duct exploration. Do not hesitate to return to A&E if there is a significant problem out of hours or contact us during working hours on the numbers below.

If you are at all concerned, contact **Maxine Chaplen/Jan Spacagna/Louise McGovern Laparoscopic Nurse Practitioners between the hours of 08.00-17.30 Monday to Friday. Tel 01803 654792** or bleep them through the hospital switchboard (01803 614567), ask for bleep 414.

If it is out of hours and an emergency please return to the hospital. Or ask the switchboard to bleep 110 and you will be able to speak to a professional nurse for advice.

For further assistance or to receive this information in a different format, please contact the department which created this leaflet.