

GALLBLADDER SURGERY POST-OPERATIVE INSTRUCTIONS

PAIN

Following laparoscopic surgery, you may feel some discomfort in your upper abdomen, right shoulder, and at the incision sites (especially the one near your belly button). You may also feel bloated. You will be given a prescription for Percocet, a mild narcotic. Percocet should be taken as follows: 1 to 2 tablets every 4 hours for pain. For the first 24 hours after surgery, you may take Percocet every 3 hours if needed. Once pain improves or if the pain is not so severe, you may substitute Percocet with Tylenol at any time. You should avoid driving while taking Percocet because it can make you drowsy. It is not uncommon to require pain medication frequently for the first 48 hours.

INCISION

Any clear plastic bandage covering an incision (wound or surgical scar) can be removed on the day after surgery. Remove the gauze under the bandage as well. There are small paper tapes covering the incision under the gauze.

All incisions will be covered by small paper tapes. The incisions, which have been closed with dissolvable stitches, are under these pieces of tape. Do not remove the small pieces of tape by yourself – they will fall off on their own in 5 to 7 days. **DO NOT PLACE ANY ANTIBIOTIC OINTMENTS OR CREAMS ON THE NEW SCAR.**

If any redness or swelling occurs around the incisions call the office. Some fluid (yellow to light red to orange) may ooze or leak from the incisions. This is generally normal. However, if the fluid is foul smelling, thick, or does not decrease in amount, call our office.

SHOWERING/BATHING

You may shower at any time but no bathing until 2 weeks after surgery. When you shower, you can get the clear plastic bandage wet (it is water-proof) or wash over the paper tapes with soap and water (they can get wet). Do not remove the small pieces of tape by yourself – they will fall off on their own in 5 to 7 days.

PHYSICAL ACTIVITY

When you return home, your body will tell you how much and what kind of activity you are able to do. When you start experiencing soreness or pain, it's time to slow down or stop what you are doing. Relax - you are not going to break, twist, or pull apart anything inside of you when you experience pain or soreness. Remember – it is important to walk as much as possible for the first week after surgery. Try to return to your normal daily activities as much as possible after surgery.

RECOVERY

Depending on the reason for gallbladder removal, you may go home the same day or the next day after surgery. Patients generally return to work an average of 3 to 7 days after surgery, depending on their pain and level of discomfort.

DIET

No restrictions, although the general anesthesia may make you nauseated the first night. If this occurs, try clear liquids (broth, flat soda, water, juice) and gradually ease into a normal diet. Stay away from spicy or fried foods for the first few days. It is common to get full quickly when eating, have some loose stools, and occasionally feel bloated after surgery. These symptoms usually improve within a few weeks, and you will find that many foods will no longer bother you. Both the anesthesia and pain medications can cause constipation. If you do not have a bowel movement within 48 hours of surgery, you may take one ounce of milk of magnesia.

FOLLOW UP

You should follow-up in the office in two weeks for your post-operative visit.

WHEN TO CONTACT THE OFFICE

Please call the office if you experience any of the following:

- Persistent fever over 101° F
- Increasing abdominal swelling
- Pain that is not relieved by your medications
- Persistent nausea or vomiting
- Chills
- Inability to eat or drink liquids
- Purulent drainage (pus) from any incision
- Redness surrounding any of your incisions that is worsening or getting bigger

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