

Patient Education

Cholecystectomy Discharge Instructions

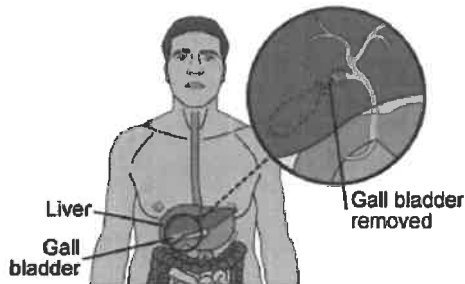
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You must carefully read the "Consumer Information Use and Disclaimer" below in order to understand and correctly use this information

About this topic

Cholecystectomy is surgery to remove the gallbladder. You may have had your gallbladder taken out with a laparoscope. This means you have a few small cuts in your belly. Other times, it is taken out through one large cut in your belly. This is called an open procedure.

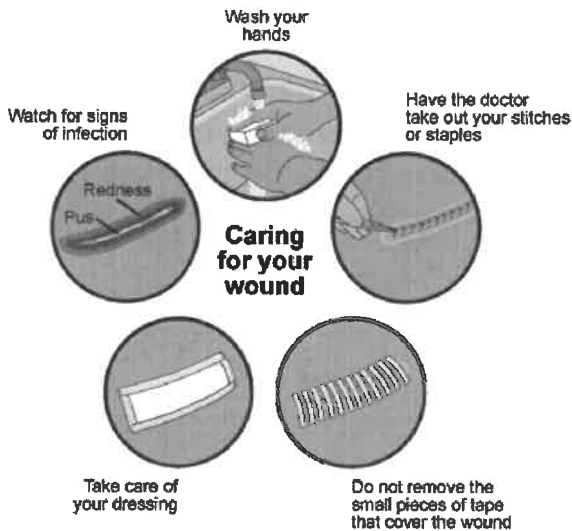
Cholecystectomy



What care is needed at home?

- Ask your doctor what you need to do when you go home. Make sure you ask questions if you do not understand what the doctor says. This way you will know what you need to do.
- Talk to your doctor about how to care for your cut site. Ask your doctor about:
 - When you should change your bandages
 - When you may take a bath or shower
 - If you need to be careful with lifting things over 10 pounds (4.5 kg)
 - When you may go back to your normal activities like work, driving, or sex
- Be sure to wash your hands before and after touching your wound or dressing.
- If you had a laparoscopic procedure, you will have a few small cut sites. They will have special tape on them called steri-strips. These will fall off on their own in about 10 days. You can take them off after 10 to 14 days if they have not fallen off.
- If you had an open procedure, you will have one large cut site. You may also have a drain to get rid of extra fluid. When the drain is taken out, there will be a small cut site.
- Keep coughing and doing deep breathing exercises for 7 to 10 days after you go home.

Wound Care



What follow-up care is needed?

- Your doctor may ask you to make visits to the office to check on your progress. Be sure to keep these visits.
- If you have stitches or staples, you will need to have them taken out. Your doctor will often want to do this in 1 to 2 weeks. If the doctor used skin glue, the glue will fall off on its own.

What drugs may be needed?

The doctor may order drugs to:

- Help with pain
- Fight an infection
- Soften stools if you are taking drugs for pain control
- Help with upset stomach

Will physical activity be limited?

- Be sure to walk 3 to 4 times each day. Try to walk a little farther and longer each day.
- You may need to rest for a while. Talk to your doctor before you run, work out, or play sports.
- Do light household work only, such as washing dishes or helping with meals.

What changes to diet are needed?

- Drink 8 to 10 glasses of fluids each day.
- Avoid eating greasy or spicy foods.
- Your doctor may suggest a high-fiber diet. Ask your doctor if you need to change your diet.

What problems could happen?

- Bleeding
- Infection
- Swelling of the pancreas
- Injury to small bowel

When do I need to call the doctor?

- Signs of infection. These include a fever of 100.4°F (38°C) or higher, chills, very bad sore throat, pain with passing urine, or wound that will not heal.
- Signs of wound infection. These include swelling, redness, warmth around the wound; too much pain when touched; yellowish, greenish, or bloody discharge; foul smell coming from the cut site; cut site opens up.
- Signs of liver problems like upset stomach or throwing up, belly pain, feeling tired, dark urine, yellow skin or eyes, not hungry.
- Bowel movements that are white or gray in color or no bowel movement for 2 to 3 days after surgery
- Sudden shortness of breath or a sudden onset of chest pain, fast heartbeat, breathing problems, and pain or tenderness in your calf could be a sign that a blood clot has traveled to your lungs. Call for emergency help right away.

Helpful tips

- When you cough, sneeze, or do deep breathing exercises, press a pillow across your cut to support the muscles to protect the wound and ease pain.
- Be active to help healing and prevent blood clots.

Teach Back: Helping You Understand

The Teach Back Method helps you understand the information we are giving you. The idea is simple. After talking with the staff, tell them in your own words what you were just told. This helps to make sure the staff has covered each thing clearly. It also helps to explain things that may have been a bit confusing. Before going home, make sure you are able to do these:

- I can tell you about my procedure.
- I can tell you how to care for my cut site.
- I can tell you what I will do if I have swelling, redness, or warmth around my wound.

Where can I learn more?

Better Health Channel

<https://www.betterhealth.vic.gov.au/health/ConditionsAndTreatments/gallbladder-gallstones-and-surgery>

FamilyDoctor.org

<http://familydoctor.org/familydoctor/en/drugs-procedures-devices/procedures-devices/gallbladder-removal-laparoscopic-method.html>

HealthLinkBC

<https://www.healthlinkbc.ca/health-topics/hw106994>

National Institute of Diabetes and Digestive and Kidney Diseases

<https://www.niddk.nih.gov/health-information/digestive-diseases/gallstones/treatment>

NHS

<https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/gallbladder-removal/what-happens/>

Consumer Information Use and Disclaimer:

This information is not specific medical advice and does not replace information you receive from your health care provider. This is only a brief summary of general information. It does NOT include all information about conditions, illnesses, injuries, tests, procedures, treatments, therapies, discharge instructions or life-style choices that may apply to you. You must talk with your health care provider for complete information about your health and treatment options. This information should not be used to decide whether or not to accept your health care provider's advice, instructions or recommendations. Only your health care provider has the knowledge and training to provide advice that is right for you.

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