



POST OPERATIVE INSTRUCTIONS: Laparoscopic Cholecystectomy

After your gallbladder surgery it is very common to feel bloating and right shoulder pain for several days afterwards. A heating pad can be very helpful for the shoulder pain. Typically, the bloating resolves on its own with walking and deep breathing.

Pain Control: It is recommended that you begin taking anti-inflammatory medications after surgery. Typically, it is recommended that you take scheduled Ibuprofen and Tylenol afterwards. The medications should be alternated every 3 hours. In between the doses of Ibuprofen and Tylenol, if you have significant pain, feel free to take the narcotic medications as needed. If you do not have significant pain, do NOT take the narcotics. If you do take the narcotic medications, please take a dose of milk of magnesia with the narcotics to prevent constipation.

Example:

Noon – Tylenol 650mg

(If still having significant pain, take narcotics 1 hour later with 15cc milk of magnesia)

3pm – Ibuprofen 600mg

(If still having significant pain, take narcotics 1 hour later with 15cc milk of magnesia)

6pm – Tylenol 650mg

(If still having significant pain, take narcotics 1 hour later with 15cc milk of magnesia)

9pm – Ibuprofen 600mg

Diet: There are no specific dietary restrictions after gallbladder surgery. However, some patients may notice loose stool or diarrhea after they begin eating. This may be worse with certain foods such as dairy products, high fat or fried foods, or spicy foods. However, it can occur with almost any foods. If you do experience diarrhea after meals, please be reassured that this will typically resolve after several days or weeks. It is unusual for this to last more than several months.

Activity: For the first few days after surgery, you may not feel like being very active due to discomfort. A simple rule is that “if it hurts, don’t do it”. Limit your activity to walking in the beginning. Going up and down stairs, going outside, and driving are all fine to do after surgery



(do NOT drive while taking narcotics, however). Any more significant strenuous activity, wait until the pain is completely gone. Once the pain is completely gone, feel free to begin light exercise and daily activities.

Wound Care: The wounds are covered by a skin glue. The skin glue is completely waterproof so you can shower the night after your surgery. Please do not rub the skin glue too vigorously as it may peel off early. After showering, leave the wounds open to air, they do not need to be covered. Typically, the glue will flake off after 4-6 weeks. Please do not peel the glue off.

Return to Work: You may return to work as early as several days to a week after surgery. The timing of when to return to work depends on your level of discomfort and the type of work you do. You are the best judge of your pain levels and the type of work required of you. It is not recommended to return to work too early as you may be quite fatigued and uncomfortable.

When to call: Please contact your doctor's office if you are experiencing shortness of breath, worsening pain despite medications, fevers of 101 degrees or higher, nausea/vomiting, severe redness or drainage at the wound, or any other issues of concern.

CHOLECYSTECTOMY TIPS

After having your gallbladder removed, some people develop frequent loose, watery stools that characterize diarrhea. In most cases, the diarrhea lasts no more than a few weeks to a few months. There is not a specific gallbladder removal diet that you should follow, but there are a few things you might consider.

First, it helps to understand why you are having diarrhea. Diarrhea after gallbladder removal seems to be related to the release of bile directly into the intestines. Normally, the gallbladder collects and concentrates bile, releasing it when you eat to aid the digestion of fat. When the gallbladder is removed, bile is less concentrated and drains more continuously into the intestines, where it can have a laxative effect.



The amount of fat you eat at one time also plays a role. Smaller amounts of fat are easier to digest, while larger amounts can remain undigested and cause gas, bloating and diarrhea.

Although there isn't a set gallbladder removal diet, the following tips may help minimize problems with diarrhea after you've had your gallbladder out:

- Go easy on the fat. Avoid high-fat foods, fried and greasy foods, and fatty sauces and gravies for at least a week after surgery. Instead, choose fat-free or low-fat foods. Low-fat foods are those with no more than 3 grams of fat a serving. Check labels and follow the serving size listed.
- Increase the fiber in your diet. This can help normalize bowel movements. Add soluble fiber, such as oats and barley, to your diet. But be sure to increase the amount of fiber slowly, such as over several weeks, because too much fiber at first can make gas and cramping worse.
- Eat smaller, more-frequent meals. This may ensure a better mix with available bile. A healthy meal should include small amounts of lean protein, such as poultry, fish, or fat-free dairy, along with vegetables, fruits and whole grains.

You may also try limiting foods that tend to worsen diarrhea, including:

- Caffeine •Dairy products •Greasy foods •Very sweet foods

Please let us know if your diarrhea does not diminish or becomes more severe, or if you lose weight and become weak. Your surgeon may recommend medicines, such as loperamide (Imodium A-D), which slows down intestinal movement, or medications that decrease the laxative effect of bile, such as cholestyramine (Prevalite). Your doctor may also suggest that you take a multivitamin to compensate for malabsorption of fat-soluble multi-vitamin.