

GALL BLADDER SURGERY (CHOLECYSTECTOMY) POST-OPERATIVE INSTRUCTIONS

- WHAT TO EXPECT**
- Right shoulder discomfort, chest tightness, bilateral shoulder discomfort for 24 to 48 hours after surgery is common, and 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 involving 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 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, so 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 from the breathing tube/general anesthesia
 - It may take a few days before you have a bowel movement. Bowel irregularity is expected with pain medication. Take stool softener for constipation; over the counter Miralax or Milk of Magnesia are good choices. You may also experience diarrhea, especially if eating foods high in fat. This should gradually resolve, allowing your diet to return to normal.
- ACTIVITY** Take it easy. Walking short distances is a good choice to stay mobile while you recuperate. Stairs are OK. Limit lifting to less than 20 lbs for the first week after surgery. Increase your activity levels as you are able.
- WORK** It is recommended to take at least one week off work to recover. If you need a work release form, please contact the office and provide a fax number to your work.
- DIET** Be sensible and start with bland foods in case of nausea. In general, you can eat your usual diet when you feel hungry for it.
- WOUND CARE** You will have 4 or 5 small wounds on your belly. All of the sutures are buried and dissolvable so there is nothing to remove. Let the skin glue fall off on its own. Showers are OK. Avoid swimming, baths, saunas for 1 month after surgery.

WHEN TO CALL THE SURGEON – 541-474-5533

Be sure to call your physician or surgeon if you develop any of the following:

- Persistent fever over 101 degrees F (39° C)
- Severe abdominal pain
- Persistent nausea or vomiting
- Bleeding
- Increasing abdominal swelling
- Redness surrounding any of your incision that is worsening or getting bigger
- Pain that is not relieved by your medications
- Chills
- Persistent cough or shortness of breath
- Purulent drainage (pus) from the incision
- You are unable to eat or drink liquids