

POSTOPERATIVE LAPAROSCOPIC CHOLECYSTECTOMY INSTRUCTIONS

GENERAL

Please have a responsible adult with you for the first 24 hours after surgery. Due to the use of anesthetic drugs, you should not make any major decisions for the first 48 hours after surgery. No alcohol, driving, or operating dangerous equipment while on any narcotic pain medications.

WOUND CARE

If your wounds are covered with a bandage you can remove it and shower 48 hours after surgery. You may have small white tapes (steri strips) covering the incision. You can shower with these in place and they will fall off on their own after 7-10 days.

If your bandage is skin glue, you may shower with this in place 24 hrs after surgery. No additional bandages are needed. The glue will flake off in 7-10 days on its own. If you have a drain in place, please ask your surgeon when you can start showering.

Regardless of your dressing, your stitches dissolve on their own. If you see a stitch sticking out, do not pick at it. Do not swim or submerge your wound for 2 weeks after surgery, or until your wound has healed.

Things to watch for at the incision: fevers, increased pain, redness, swelling or any discharge are signs of a possible infection. Please call the office immediately if you experience any of these symptoms.

SCAR MANAGEMENT

Scars evolve over time, but in the early stages your body is working hard to make them strong. Expect them to darken in the first 3-6 weeks. After that, they should lighten with time. It can take up to a year for a scar to fully mature. After obtaining approval from your surgeon (>3 weeks after surgery), you can use any non-fragranced, non-colored lotion such as Aquaphor, Lubriderm, Neutrogena, or Eucerin, but it's not necessary. If your scar will be exposed to the sun, apply sunscreen, otherwise your scar may get darker or turn red if it gets too much sun. Contact our office if you would like to purchase an advanced scar care system.

DIET

We recommend a low fat diet for one month after surgery. It is suggested to eat smaller more frequent meals. Increasing fiber is also helpful. These are recommended due to the gallbladder normally collecting and concentrating 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.

Narcotic pain medications can make you constipated, so it is important to take in plenty of fluids. Protein is important for wound healing. A balanced diet of lean meat, fish, vegetables and fruits is important to give you strength for the healing process.

ACTIVITY

Moderate exercise is encouraged. Limit your exercise to walking in the immediate week following surgery, then can slowly increase after that. Please use both arms in your normal

activities of daily living.

MEDICATIONS

- Narcotic pain medication is available by prescription only. There may be a tendency to dizziness, nausea, or constipation. Please take with food to prevent side effects. Do not drive or drink alcohol while on narcotic pain medications.
- Ibuprofen (Advil or Motrin) are all the same type of anti-inflammatory medication broken down in your kidneys. They are in the same class of medication as Aspirin. We recommend using 1-3 tablets (200mg each) every 6 hours for the first 3 days if you are having pain. After three days, use the medication only as needed. If you have a history of stomach ulcers, gastrointestinal bleeding, a history of kidney problems do not take these medications, instead, take only Tylenol.
- Tylenol (acetaminophen) is a pain reliever that is broken down in your liver. The recommended dose for Tylenol is 500-1,000 mg every 8 hours.
- **Ibuprofen and Tylenol can be taken together safely. We recommend alternating the medications every 3-4 hours for best relief so they overlap.**
- Stool Softeners are recommended while taking pain meds. (Colace 100mg or Miralax). If your bowel movements are too loose, stop the medication. You may take twice daily if necessary.

If your pain is not controlled with the combination of these drugs, please call the office. If you have breast reconstruction, your plastic surgeon may be the provider that is prescribing your medication, and if so, would be responsible for refills or medication changes.

PATHOLOGY

Your pathology results should be back 3-4 business days after surgery. We will attempt to call you with results if your clinic visit isn't scheduled within the week. Feel free to call the office on the 5th business day following your surgery if you want to discuss the results and have not heard from someone in the office.

Please call the office if you have any additional questions at 303-812-6850.