

What to Expect After Surgery Gallbladder Removal Surgery?

Most gallbladder operations are performed on an outpatient basis, and therefore you will probably go home on the same day of the operation. Rarely, individuals with certain medical conditions will be observed in hospital overnight.

After completion of the operation, you will be transferred to the recovery room where you will be monitored until you are fully awake, your pain is well controlled, and you can walk unassisted.

Pain after Surgery - Local anaesthetic is usually injected into the wounds (while the patient is still under anesthesia) to minimise pain immediately after surgery and this should last for four to six hours.

Pain at the incision sites and in your abdomen is normal. You might also have pain in your shoulders. This is from the carbon dioxide gas put into your abdomen during the operation. The shoulder pain should go away in 24 to 48 hours.

You can take non-prescription medications to relieve pain, unless your doctor tells you not to. Acetaminophen (Tylenol®) and ibuprofen (Advil®) are examples of non-prescription pain medications. Putting ice on your incisions can also help

Your surgeon might prescribe a small amount of narcotic pain medicine to help you with pain. Most people do not require narcotics. Fill the prescription if your pain is not well controlled with Acetaminophen or Ibuprofen.

You might feel sick to your stomach (nauseated) or throw up (vomit) after your surgery. This is due to medications used for anesthesia. You should feel better in a day or two. If you have persistent vomiting and are unable to tolerate liquids, contact your doctor.

Diet - Resume normal diet as soon you feel like drinking and eating. Avoid alcohol while taking narcotic medications.

Activity - You are encouraged to resume light activities and walking immediately after surgery. Avoid heavy lifting (over 10 lbs) for 4 weeks

Most people can return to office work within 1 week after surgery. Full activities can be resumed in 4 weeks. Comfort should be your guide to most activities.

Driving - Most people can drive after about 3 days post-surgery. You must not be taking any narcotic medications and must be able to brake comfortably if you need to make a sudden stop.

Wound Care - It is safe to shower 48 hours after surgery. Pat the wounds dry gently. Do not rub or apply soap to the area. Tub baths are safe after 2 – 3 weeks.

Steri-Strips can be removed after 7 days (they peel off like a Band-Aid). The sutures under the skin dissolve by itself. Mild ooze of blood from the incisions is not unusual. Apply gentle pressure to the area and change a dry dressing as needed.

Bruising around the wound and tracking down into the lower abdomen is sometimes seen - this looks dramatic but is harmless and will settle spontaneously. Applying an ice pack to the area for the first 24 – 48 hours may help reduce the swelling and bruising. If a wound becomes red, hot or starts to drain pus or blood, contact your surgeon's office. If not available, go to Credit Valley ER in case you have a wound infection and need antibiotics.

If you had an open surgery with a large incision, you need more time to recover. You will probably need to stay in the hospital for a few days after surgery. Expect to go back to full activities in 4 to 6 weeks. You will probably recover more slowly in other ways, too. Your doctor can tell you what to expect.

Follow Up Post Surgery

An appointment with your surgeon will be scheduled at the Ambulatory Care Clinic at Credit Valley Hospital, usually in 4 – 6 weeks. Hospital staff will contact you for an appointment time and date within a few days after surgery. If you are not called within a week after surgery, please contact our office.

When To Call Your Doctor's Office (or go to the EMERGENCY)

- Fever over 38.3 degrees C (101 F)
 - Jaundice (yellow eyes or skin)
 - Severe Bleeding from your incision(s)
 - Foul smelling drainage (pus) from any incision
 - Redness surrounding any of your incisions that is spreading
 - Progressive swelling of the abdomen
 - Nausea, vomiting, and/or inability to eat or drink liquids
 - Inability to urinate
 - Pain that is not relieved by your pain medications
 - Cough or shortness of breath
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