

## **Laparoscopic Cholecystectomy** **Postoperative Instructions**

Laparoscopic gallbladder surgery is a great advance over the old open method, but it is not painless. Expect pain around the incision sites or perhaps in the neck, chest or shoulder areas. This latter pain is from the gas that we put into the abdomen at the time of surgery and always resolves, but sometimes is quite severe. Pain that worsens after a few days instead of improving is a reason to call.

There are no dietary restrictions unless you are already on a special diet. It really doesn't matter how much solid food you eat in the first few days following surgery, just so you drink plenty of fluids. You can resume your usual medications and take aspirin immediately following surgery.

Gas and bloating are very common up to a week following surgery. Take your favorite laxative if you become constipated. Pain medicines are very constipating and may cause nausea. Dulcolax tablets or suppositories usually work well. The sooner that you can manage with Tylenol or ibuprofen to control your pain, the better. Sometimes after gallbladder surgery bowel movements may be loose for a month or so. Metamucil or Immodium usually help.

Fever up to 101 degrees in the first 48 hours following surgery is common, particularly if you smoke. Take Tylenol for fever episodes. Higher temperatures or new or persistent fever after several days should be reported. Report any signs of infection such as redness, pus, drainage, or unusual swelling at the wound sites. Bruising around the incision sites is also common and there may be swelling in size of a grape. If it is more extensive than that, let me know.

You can shower 24 hours following surgery and pursue light activities such as walking and light lifting. If it hurts, don't do it. Band-Aids and dressings can be removed in 24 hours and left off unless you would prefer to keep the wounds covered. You can drive a car when you are comfortable and not taking narcotic pain medications such as Percocet. After a week you should be able to return to all preoperative activities without restrictions. Don't be alarmed by transient twinges of pain. If you have specific questions about your work or other activities, please ask at your first postoperative visit. We will supply you with a work release if necessary.

I am available most weekdays and many weekends for problems that you may be experiencing. If not, one of my partners will be available to respond to your concerns. Try to call during regular office hours, 8:30 AM to 5 PM. If Barbara cannot answer your questions, she will let me know and I will call you back. Please be patient, unless it is urgent, it may be at the end of the office day. Remember, the on-call doctor is usually very busy, if you think that your problem can wait until the next office day, it would be appreciated.

Best wishes for speedy recovery.

Doctor Mac

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