



Royal Berkshire
NHS Foundation Trust

Advice following
laparoscopic (keyhole)
cholecystectomy
(removal of gallbladder)

Adult Day Surgery Unit

What is a laparoscopic cholecystectomy?

This operation consists of the removal of the gallbladder, which is a small organ, shaped like a pear that is attached underneath the liver. The gallbladder stores bile, a yellow fluid that helps to digest your food.

The removal of the gallbladder will not affect the digestion process, as it only stores bile. Without a gallbladder, the bile passes directly from the liver (where it is made) into the gut. The most common cause for removal is the formation of gallstones.

The operation involves the insertion of small tubes through the abdominal wall. A camera and surgical instruments are passed through these tubes to view the inside of your abdomen and perform the operation. When you wake up, you will see three or four plasters over the insertion sites. These sites will have been stitched or glued.

After the operation

- Please try to gently mobilise (walk about) when you get home, to minimise the risk of developing blood clots in your legs. You will probably not feel able to do your usual activities straight away, but within 2-3 days, your discomfort should have improved and you can then resume your normal activity gradually, as you feel able.
- It is a good idea to take regular simple analgesia (paracetamol or ibuprofen unless you are allergic or advised not to by your team) for the first few days after your operation. Thereafter, you can take these tablets as required.
- You have shower proof dressings, so it is fine to take a shower, but please avoid soaking the dressings or bathing for 4 days post-operatively. Then you can remove the dressings, leaving the wounds uncovered to help with the healing process.

- You have dissolvable stitches. These may take four to six weeks to dissolve.
 - Please make an appointment with the practice nurse at your GP's surgery, for removal of stitches on _____
- * *Delete as appropriate.*
- You may experience some pain and discomfort during the first week, but this should improve day after day. This is mainly due to the use of carbon dioxide gas to inflate your abdomen, and the pain can radiate up into your shoulders. This is completely normal. You should take regular painkillers (such as Paracetamol or Ibuprofen) to help relieve your pain.
 - If the pain worsens during the first few days, or becomes unbearable, please seek urgent medical attention at the hospital.
 - For any problems regarding wound discomfort or weeping, please telephone the Adult Day Surgery Unit for advice. Out of hours, go to your nearest Accident & Emergency Department.
 - You should stay off work for _____. You may need to refrain from work for longer than this, depending on the healing process. Please make an appointment with your GP if this needs to be reviewed.
 - Avoid heavy lifting for four to six weeks.
 - Do not drive for three to five days as the operation may have affected your reflexes. Check with your motor insurance company before driving a vehicle.

If there is anything you do not understand or if you have any questions or concerns, please feel free to discuss them with your nurse.

During the first 24 hours following your discharge

If you have any further concerns about your surgery, please telephone the ADSU: 0118 322 7622. Fax: 0118 322 8214

Opening hours are 7.30am to 10.00pm Monday-Friday, 7.30am to 4.00pm Saturday. If you need help/advice outside these hours, please telephone the Royal Berkshire Hospital switchboard on 0118 322 5111 and ask for the on-call surgery doctor. Please note that this should be for emergencies only.

For further information about the Trust, visit our website
www.royalberkshire.nhs.uk

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