

# LAPAROSCOPIC CHOLECYSTECTOMY Overview

## What causes gallbladder problems?

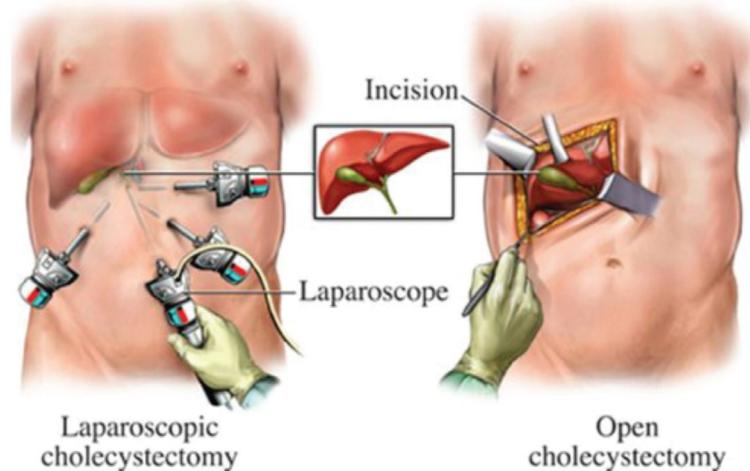
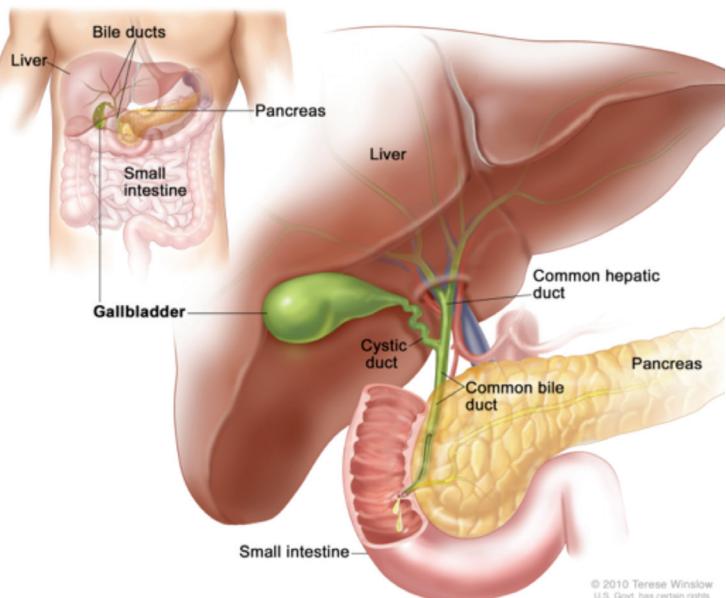
- The gallbladder is a storage facility for bile, and sits on the surface of the liver.
- When you eat food, the gallbladder gets a signal to squeeze, and sends bile into your intestine to help digest fat.
- Gallstones can disrupt gallbladder emptying, which can cause pain and inflammation.
- Gallstones can form in the gallbladder over time, and are thought to be caused by certain dietary choices or other medical conditions (pregnancy, some blood disorders).

## What sort of testing can be done to determine if I am having gallbladder problems?

- Blood tests, imaging and physical examination are the best tests to determine if you are experiencing issues with your gallbladder.
- Blood tests will determine whether or not a gallbladder infection may be present, and to make sure that bile is emptying from the liver properly.
- An ultrasound of the abdomen is a good test to evaluate for gallstones and gallbladder abnormalities.
- A CT scan may also be performed if the above tests are not conclusive.
- A HIDA scan is a nuclear medicine test that can also be performed to determine if the gallbladder is functioning properly.

## My doctor has recommended that I have surgery to remove my gallbladder. What should I expect with gallbladder surgery?

- Cholecystectomy (removal of the gallbladder) is one of the most common general surgical procedures performed in the United States.
- The procedure is performed laparoscopically or robotically, through four small incisions.
- You will receive general anesthesia for the procedure, which means that you will be completely asleep.
- Unless you are admitted to the hospital prior to your procedure, the procedure is typically a same day surgery.



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## Getting Ready for Surgery

- Do not eat anything after midnight the night before surgery.
- You may have water up to 4 hours prior to surgery.
- Within 4 hours of surgery, do not eat or drink anything.
- Ask your surgeon if certain medications should be stopped prior to surgery, like blood thinners, or medications that affect blood pressure or blood sugar.
- If you take 81mg Aspirin (baby aspirin), DO NOT STOP that medication around the time of surgery.
- Arrange for an adult family member or friend to drive you home after surgery.

## POST OPERATIVE INSTRUCTIONS

### I have had my gallbladder surgery. What am I allowed to do after the operation?

#### Incisions

- You will have a prescription for pain medication sent electronically for you to pick up on the way home from the hospital. The pain medication should last long enough to get you through the incisional discomfort experienced in the first couple of days.
- With prescription pain medication, 600mg ibuprofen can also be taken every 6 hours for 5 days (ask your surgeon if this is OK based on your medical history). The prescription pain medication has Tylenol in it, so do not take Tylenol when taking the pain medication.
- When out of prescription medication, Tylenol and ibuprofen can be taken as needed.
- Apply ice packs to incisions for 20 minutes at a time 3 times per day to help with discomfort if needed.
- Your incisions will be covered in waterproof glue and closed with dissolvable sutures, so you may shower the morning after surgery. Do not submerge the incisions (bath, pool) for 2 weeks.

#### Activity

- Do not lift more than 15lbs for the first two weeks after surgery (until your follow up appointment). This is to prevent hernia formation at the incision that the gallbladder is removed through. Generally speaking, if you have to use two hands to lift it, it is too heavy.
- Walking, light aerobic exercise, and going up and down stairs is acceptable and encouraged.
- Do not drive while on prescription pain medication. After you are comfortable enough to be off of that medication, you may drive if you feel as though you can quickly go from the gas to the brake.

#### Diet

- In the first two to three weeks after gallbladder surgery, your body will be getting used to not having a gallbladder.
- In that time period, eating foods that are fried or fatty may cause abdominal bloating, discomfort and diarrhea. While this is not dangerous, it may be uncomfortable.
- Long term, your body will get used to not having a gallbladder, and there are no dietary restrictions.
- Nausea and decreased appetite are common after surgery. If you are having issues with continued nausea, a prescription for medication can be provided to help you feel better.

#### Follow Up

- Your follow up appointment will be scheduled for about 2 weeks following surgery.
- Call the office to schedule a follow up appointment.
- If you have any questions or concerns, call our office. There is someone to answer the call 24 hours/day, 7 days/week.

