

DISCHARGE ADVICE FOLLOWING LAPAROSCOPIC CHOLECYSTECTOMY

[Removal of your gallbladder using "key-hole" surgery]

1. **REST AND SLEEP.** It is a good idea to rest at some point during the day. Accept offers of help with housework and childcare. Make sure you get a good night's sleep. When you return home, it is normal to feel tired and run down: it will take time for things to return to normal. Do not try to achieve too much too soon – you will only end up feeling frustrated. Gradually increase activities over a couple of weeks.
2. **EXERCISE.** Gentle mobilisation and exercise is important from the day after surgery. When you get home, increase exercise gradually. Swimming is a good way to start, as is gentle work in a gymnasium. Exercise bikes and controlled activity are good. Competitive sports take longer.
3. **COUGHING.** It is a good idea to practice coughing and deep breathing exercises before surgery. After surgery, you need to do deep breathing at least every two hours for the first few days.
4. **PAIN.** Whilst in hospital, please inform the nurse if you have any pain. When you go home, the pain should be minimal and can be relieved with the type of painkillers normally taken for a headache. Paracetamol is recommended to a maximum of 8 tablets in 24 hours. Co-proxamol may also be given and is a little stronger.
5. **EATING.** You may eat normally after the removal of your gallbladder. This includes food with fat. Try and eat a healthy diet anyway – if you need advice, please ask. The fact that you can now eat fat means that, if you are not careful, you will gain weight. Beware!
6. **BOWELS.** Try not to become constipated by maintaining gentle exercise, drinking plenty of fluids and eating a healthy, high fibre diet. If you do have a problem, a mild laxative may help.
7. **WOUND.** You will have four or more small puncture sites on your abdomen. It is normal to sometimes feel tingling, numbness or itching around the sites. Please be aware that any swelling, redness or inflammation should be reported. You may have soluble stitches and you may need to have the stitches removed when you attend for your follow-up appointment. You may bath and shower normally, as it does not matter if you get the wounds wet. We usually give you spare dressings to change afterwards.
8. **DRIVING.** We advise you not to drive for about ten days after surgery. Practice an emergency stop: if it hurts, you need to leave it a little longer until you are able to perform a full emergency stop.
9. **WORK.** Expect to have about two weeks off work, but you may return sooner if you wish. Your GP will provide a medical certificate for this time. The Hospital will provide a certificate for the time you are in hospital.
10. **SEXUAL ACTIVITY.** This can be resumed as soon as you feel comfortable.
11. **GENERAL GUIDELINE.** If it doesn't hurt, DO IT; if it does hurt, DON'T DO IT.