

Gall Bladder Removal Surgery

Surgery to remove your gall bladder is called **cholecystectomy**. The gall bladder is an organ on the right side of your upper abdomen. The gall bladder may need to be removed when there are stones in it or in the duct leading from the gall bladder. The stones may cause swelling or infection.

There are two ways to do this surgery. Ask your doctor which way your surgery will be done.

- **Laparoscopic gall bladder removal surgery**

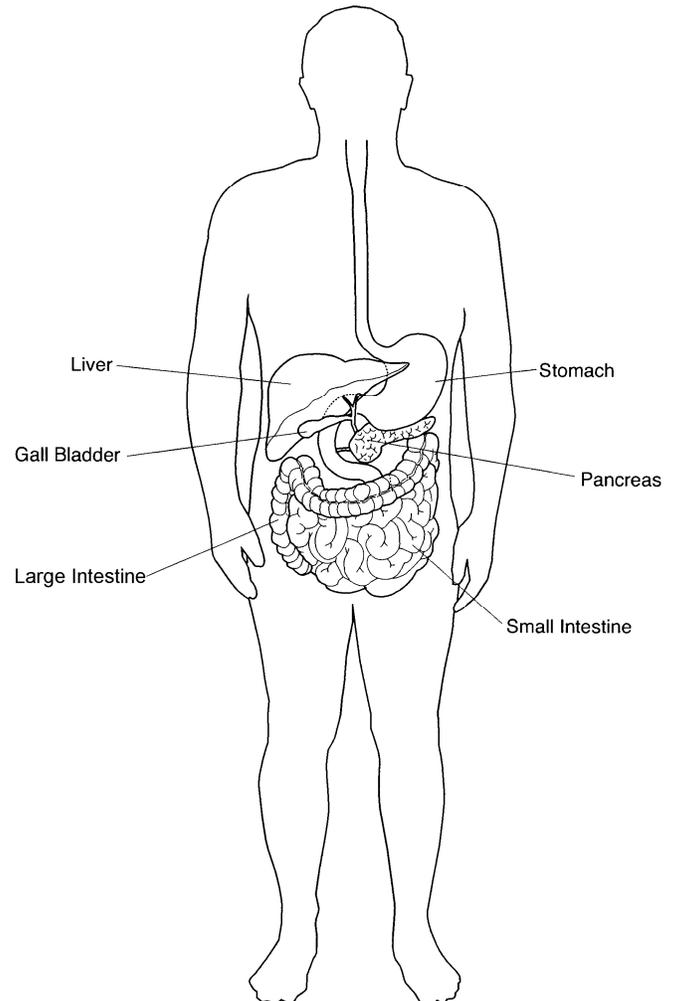
Three or four small incisions are made in the abdomen. The doctor uses a camera and tools through the incisions to remove the gall bladder. With this type of surgery, you may recover faster, have less pain, less scarring and fewer wound problems. Often you will go home within 24 hours after surgery.

- **Open gall bladder removal surgery**

A larger incision is made below the ribs on the right side of the abdomen. The doctor works through this incision to remove the gall bladder. You may stay in the hospital for up to 3 days after surgery.

To Prepare

- Tell your doctor all the medicines you are taking. Be sure to include any prescription or over the counter medicines, vitamins and herbs.
- You may be told **not to take any aspirin or ibuprofen** a few days before your surgery.



- Ask your doctor if you are to take any of your medicines the morning of your surgery. If so, take with small sips of water only.
- Do not eat or drink anything, including water, after midnight the night before your surgery.
- If you have any allergies to medicines, foods or other things, tell the staff before your surgery.

During Surgery

- You will wear a hospital gown.
- An IV (intravenous) tube or catheter is put into a vein in your arm for giving medicine and fluids.
- You are taken on a cart to the surgery room. You are helped onto the surgery table. A belt may be put over your legs for your safety.
- You will be given medicine so you will sleep through the surgery. The medicine is given through the IV or by using a face mask.
- Your abdomen is cleaned and sheets are put over you to keep the area clean.
- The incision(s) are made.
- Your gall bladder is removed.
- The incision(s) are closed with stitches, staples or special tapes called steri-strips.
- A bandage is put over the stitches or staples.

After Surgery

In the Hospital

- You are taken to the recovery room where you are watched closely until you wake up and are doing well.
- Your breathing, blood pressure and pulse are checked often.
- Your doctor will talk to you about your surgery.

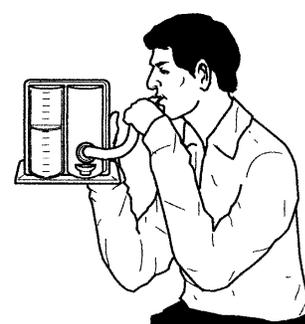
- If you are going home the day of surgery, the medicines given during the surgery will make you sleepy. You will need to have an adult family member or friend take you home for your safety.
- If you have the large incision, you will be taken to your hospital room. You may have a drain in place near your incision. This will be checked and emptied by the nursing staff. Often the drain is removed before you leave the hospital.

At Home

- Rest. Increase your activity each day.
- Take your medicines as directed by your doctor.
- Call your doctor to schedule a follow-up visit.
- **You can take a shower 2 days after your surgery. Do not** take a tub bath for one week after your surgery.
- If you have a bandage over your incision, it will be removed after the second day. You do not need to replace the bandage unless you were told to do so by your doctor or nurse. The nurse will teach you to change the bandage if needed. **If you have steri-strips** over your incision, leave them alone. They should fall off on their own in 7 to 10 days.
- Neck or shoulder pain after the laparoscopic surgery is common from the air that was put into your abdomen during surgery. Rest and use heat on your shoulder to ease the pain. Raise your head and shoulders up on several pillows.
- It may be hard for you to have a bowel movement after surgery. Walking and eating high fiber cereals, beans, vegetables and whole grain breads will help. Drinking prune juice may also help.
- You may be taught to do deep breathing and coughing exercises to keep you from getting a lung infection after surgery. Deep breathe and cough every hour while you are awake and if you wake up during the night. Use a pillow or folded blanket over your incision for support when you deep breathe and cough.



Coughing



Incentive Spirometer

- **Do not** lift objects over _____ pounds for _____ days.
- **Do not** drive until your doctor tells you that you can. Be sure you are no longer taking prescription pain medicine when you start driving.
- Talk to your doctor or nurse about other activity limits, such as returning to work or walking up stairs.

Call your doctor right away if you have:

- Pain in your abdomen or shoulder area that does not go away or gets worse
- Increased redness, bruising or swelling
- A fever over 101 degrees F
- Vomiting
- Chills, a cough, or you feel weak and achy
- Skin that is itchy, swollen skin or has a rash
- Trouble having a bowel movement or have diarrhea often

Call 911 right away if:

- Your incisions come apart or you start bleeding.
- You have trouble breathing all of a sudden.
- You have chest pain.

Talk to your doctor or nurse if you have any questions or concerns.