

Postoperative Instructions for Gallbladder Surgery Patients

Description of Procedure

The gallbladder is an organ that is attached directly to the liver and connects to the small intestine through a series of tubes or ducts. Its primary function is to store bile produced in the liver, to concentrate it and to inject it into the small intestine after eating. Patients generally require removal of the gallbladder when it becomes dysfunctional causing pain and nausea which is often times associated with the formation of gall stones. Surgery is generally recommended for patients who have pain and nausea from the gall bladder but also to remove the complications of gallbladder disease including pancreatitis, biliary obstruction and jaundice with gall bladder and liver infections.

Post Operative Pain

Generally pain following laparoscopic gallbladder surgery is moderate. Most patients require narcotic pain medications for less than a week following surgery. These medications can be supplemented using anti-inflammatory medication such as Motrin® or Advil® taken up to 3 times daily; or every 8 hours with food.

Common Findings on Examination After Surgery

A patient may note bruising around the incision sites and firmness and lumpiness directly underneath the incisions. Some patients may experience nausea for the first day or two after surgery. Post-operative nausea will sometimes require medications given by the surgeon or change in the post operative pain medications. Should you experience significant nausea and vomiting after surgery not relieved with the medication always call your surgeon to receive specific instructions.

Common Things to Watch for After Your Gallbladder Surgery

- #1. **Infection.** Should you notice redness, warmth or drainage from the wound that is increasing in intensity call your doctor immediately.
- #2. **Worsening Symptoms.** Should you experience increasing abdominal pain, nausea or vomiting and fever, again call your doctor immediately.
- #3. **Constipation.** Narcotic pain medication commonly causes constipation in post operative patients. It is almost always appropriate to take a stool softener such as Colace® once in the morning and once at night in order to lessen the effects of constipation from the narcotics. Should you still be constipated after surgery a Ducolax® suppository which can be obtained over the counter can be used once in the morning and once at night as needed to produce a bowel movement. Some patients also find benefit from using milk of magnesia 30cc by mouth in the morning and at night until bowel movements resume. Should these over the counter medications be inadequate to produce normal bowel movements please call your doctor to receive additional instructions.

Post Operative Restrictions

Patients should avoid heavy lifting or strenuous activities 1 week following surgery. After 1 week, office types work or routine daily households chores are completely appropriate. 2 weeks following surgery even vigorous activities are appropriate and no restrictions occur in most patients following 2 weeks of recovery.

Follow Up

You should call your surgeon's office any time you have any questions regarding your surgery. A routine follow up visit is made 7 to 10 days following the surgery. Call the office to schedule your follow up appointment convenient to your schedule. A final post operative check will be made 6 weeks following surgery.