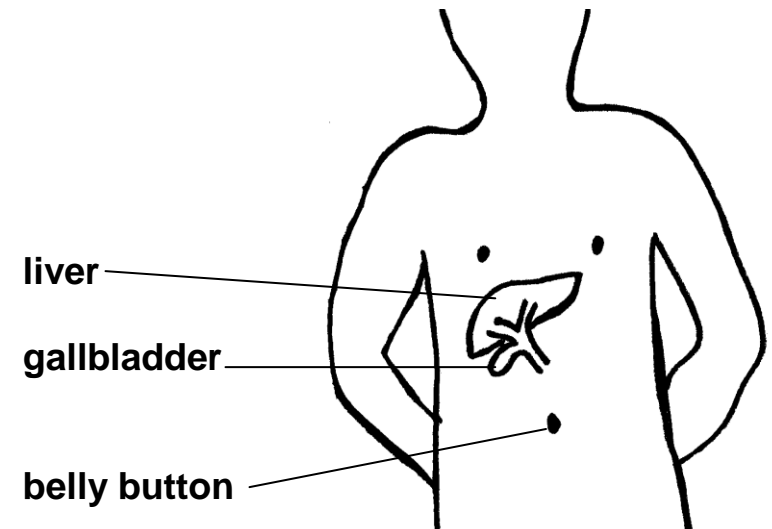


## Getting Ready for Gallbladder Surgery Laparoscopic Cholecystectomy also called Lap Chole

### What does my gallbladder do?

The gallbladder stores bile. Bile is made in the liver and plays a part in digesting fat in your food. Bile will still be present, after your gallbladder is removed.

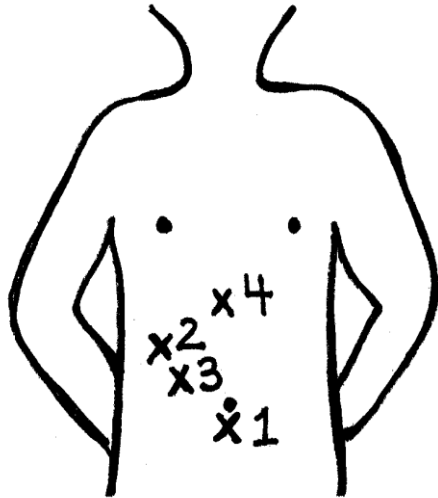
This picture shows where your gallbladder is in your body:



## What is laparoscopic cholecystectomy?

Laparoscopic cholecystectomy is surgery to remove your gallbladder. It is done by making 4 small incisions (cuts), 2.5 cm (1/2 inch) or less, in your abdomen (stomach area).

This picture shows where the incisions are:



- 1 This incision is used to put carbon dioxide gas into the abdomen, so the gallbladder can be seen. Then a small video camera is put into this incision.
- 2 and 3 - These are smaller incisions for instruments that hold and move the gallbladder.
- 4 This incision is for an instrument that removes the gallbladder.

Your incisions (cuts) may not be in the same places.

## Returning to work

The usual time off work is 2 weeks. This time can vary depending on the type of work you do. Talk with your doctor about when you can expect to return to work.

## How do I care for the incisions?

Look at the incisions each day. Each incision should be a dry, closed line. Your incisions may be covered with tape.

Try to keep the tape clean and dry. If the tape falls off at home, you can leave it off.

If you have stitches or clips in the incisions, they will be taken out at your follow-up visit with the surgeon.

## When do I see the surgeon again?

Contact your surgeon's office for a follow-up appointment after surgery if you do not have one.



## Call your family doctor or surgeon if you notice:

- pain not relieved by pain medication
- any incision is red, swollen or painful
- a lot of bleeding or drainage from an incision (a small amount is common)
- you have a fever greater than 38.5° (101° F)
- you vomit and continue to feel sick
- you have chest pain or shortness of breath

## What activity can I do?

### Deep breathing, coughing, circulation exercises

For the first few hours after surgery, do your deep breathing, coughing and circulation exercises each hour, while you are awake. When you are able to get up and walk around, you do not need to do these exercises.

### Walking, work and other activities

Moving and walking can help you recover. Ask your nurse to help you the first time you get up after surgery. As you feel stronger, you will be able to take longer walks.



At home, gradually resume your normal activities. Do not do heavy lifting or strenuous exercise until you check with your surgeon.

Most people are off work 1 week. This varies depending on the type of job you do. Talk to your surgeon about this.

### Hygiene

You may shower the day after surgery. Use mild soap and pat incisions dry. Try to keep tape clean and dry. If you have stitches that need removing, this will be done at your follow-up visit with your surgeon.

This type of gallbladder surgery takes about 1 hour. Laparoscopic cholecystectomy does not use lasers to remove the gallbladder.

For a small number of people the gallbladder cannot be removed this way. Sometimes during the laparoscopic cholecystectomy, the doctor decides to remove your gallbladder by the **Open Method** for safety reasons.

### What is the Open Method?

In the Open Method the gallbladder is removed through a 15 to 20 cm (6 to 8 inch) incision in your abdomen (stomach area).

If you have the Open Method to remove your gallbladder, your stay in hospital will be about 1 to 5 days. Your recovery period will be about 4 to 6 weeks.

### Where will I go after surgery?

You will go to the recovery area after surgery. You will stay there until you are fully awake. Then you will be taken back to the Day Surgery Unit to recover and go home in about 4 hours.



## How will I feel after surgery?

In the first few hours after surgery, you may feel pain, discomfort and nausea.

People feel pain after surgery in different ways. You may have some crampy abdominal pain. Some feel pain in the shoulder area. You will be given pain control medication in the recovery area to help.



If you have nausea or feel sick to your stomach, tell your nurse. Medication can help.

## How can I relieve pain and discomfort?

When you return to the Day Surgery Unit, ask your nurse for pain control medication. The nurse will let you know how often you can have pain control medication. You may learn how to use a Patient Controlled Analgesia (PCA) pump to give yourself pain control medication.

Other ways to relieve pain and discomfort are:

- drinking warm fluids
- walking
- any method of relaxation, such as listening to music or deep breathing

When you go home, take the pain control medication suggested by your doctor. Your pain should become less each day. If your pain does not decrease, call your family doctor or surgeon.

## How long will I be in hospital?

You will come to the hospital the day of your surgery. Most people go home the same day. You will need to arrange for someone to take you home and stay with you that night.

## What can I eat and drink after surgery?

You will be given fluids through a small tube in your arm called an IV until you are fully awake.

Your nurse will tell you when you can start drinking fluids and eating.

At home, follow your normal diet. Try to drink as much as you can until you are eating again. Eat fruit, vegetables and whole grain products to maintain soft bowel movements and prevent constipation.



If you have any questions about your diet, talk to your family doctor.

Talk to your surgeon or ask to see a dietitian about the amount of fluid to drink if you have kidney or heart problems.