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Laparoscopic Cholecystectomy

What is a laparoscopic Cholecystectomy?

A laparoscopic Cholecystectomy is a surgical procedure in which your health care provider removes your gallbladder with a laparoscope and other surgical tools. A Laparoscope is a thin metal tube with a light and tiny camera. Your provider can put it into you abdominal cavity and see your internal organs, such as your gallbladder.

Removal of the gallbladder should cause few, if any, long-term problems because the digestive system can function normally without it.

When is it used?

This procedure is performed when you have stones in you gallbladder. The gallbladder is a pear-shaped organ that is part of the digestive system. It lies beneath the liver on your right side. It stores bile, which is a fluid produced by the liver to help to digest fats. Particles in the bile may form gallstones. These stones may remain loose in your gallbladder or block the gallbladder and common bile duct. Or they may pass into your intestine. Gallstones can cause abdominal pain, swelling, or infection.

Alternatives include:

- *Removing the gallbladder by open surgery without a laparoscope*
- *Dissolving the stones with drugs*
- *Choosing not to have treatment, recognizing the risk of your problem.*

In most cases a laparoscopic procedure is done to remove the gallbladder rather than open surgery. If there is infection, scarring, or a very large gallstone in the gallbladder, open surgery may be needed. This means the doctor makes a larger cut in your abdomen and then removes the gallbladder through the cut. You should ask your health care provider about the choices for the treatment.

How do I prepare for a laparoscopic Cholecystectomy?

Plan for your care and recovery after the operation. Allow for time to rest. Try to find people to help you with your day-to-day duties for the first couple of days after surgery.

Follow your health care provider's instructions about not smoking before and after the procedure. Smokers heal more slowly after surgery. They are also more likely to have breathing problems during surgery. For this reason, if you are a smoker, you should quit at least 2 weeks before the procedure. It is best to quit 6 to 8 weeks before surgery. Also, your wounds will heal much better if you do not smoke after the surgery.

Follow any other instructions your provider gives you. The night before the procedure, eat a light meal such as soup and salad. Do not eat or drink anything after midnight and the morning before the procedure. Do not even drink coffee, tea, or water.

What happens during the procedure?

You are given a general anesthetic. A general anesthetic will relax your muscles and put you to sleep. It will prevent you from feeling pain during the operation.

Your abdomen will be inflated with carbon dioxide gas. This helps your provider see the gallbladder and other organs. Your provider makes a tiny cut in your abdomen and inserts the laparoscope through the cut. Your provider then removes your gallbladder and the stones with a laser or a tool that burns with an electric current. (electrical cautery).

What happens after the procedure?

You may leave the hospital later the same day or in about 1 to 2 days, depending on your condition. You may return to a normal lifestyle within 4 to 5 days.

Ask your health care provider if there are any restrictions on lifting or exercising. Ask what steps you should take and when you should come back for a checkup.

What are the benefits on this procedure?

You will be rid of the painful gallbladder without the discomfort and abdominal surgery. Your stay at the hospital should be shorter.

What are the risks associated with this procedure?

- *There are some risks when you have general anesthesia. Discuss these risks with your health care provider.*
- *You may have infection or bleeding.*
- *The common bile duct or another nearby organ may be damaged. You may need further surgery for repairs of the damage.*
- *The bile may leak. To correct this, your provider may put in a drainage tube.*
- *You may have pain in your shoulder from the carbon dioxide used to inflate your abdomen cavity.*

You should ask your health care provider how these risks apply to you.

When should I call my health care provider?

Call your provider right away if:

- *You develop a fever.*
- *You have bleeding.*
- *You have a foul-smelling wound.*
- *You have severe pain.*
- *You have nausea or vomiting.*

Kindly make arrangements with the office of Dr WP de Beer to obtain a medical certificate (sick note), if required.

NB!!! IF THE WARD DID NOT BOOK A FOLLOW-UP APPOINTMENT, PLEASE CALL THE ROOMS TO DO SO.

