

POST-OPERATIVE INSTRUCTIONS FOLLOWING LAPAROSCOPIC CHOLECYSTECTOMY:

1. After discharge from the hospital, you may eat and drink anything you desire unless you are on a restricted diet because of other medical problems
2. There are no restrictions to lifting, driving or any other physical activity within reason. In general, running, jumping or heavy exercise should be avoided for at least 2-3 weeks.
3. There are usually four small incisions covered either by small paper strips and a plastic dressing or Dermabond (skin glue). The umbilical (belly button) incision may also have a small gauze dressing. After 3 days, remove the clear plastic dressing, but leave the steri-strips in place until they fall off by themselves. This usually occurs within one to three weeks. The longer the dressings stay on, the better the scars will look. Do not try to remove the Dermabond dressing – it will come off slowly.
4. You may shower, bathe or swim and get the plastic dressings wet on the day following surgery.
5. Constipation is a frequent problem post-operatively, especially if you are taking any narcotic pain medication. Unless you experience diarrhea, taking a stool softener after leaving the hospital can greatly improve pain control and prevent constipation. Our recommended agent is Senokot S (over the counter), 2 tablets twice a day for a week. If you do not have a bowel movement after one or two days at home, you may take a gentle laxative, either Milk of Magnesia or prune juice. If you begin to have severe pain, call us.
6. You may return to work without restrictions as soon as you feel able, usually within one to two weeks.
7. It is normal to feel some right-sided shoulder pain for a short time. Please call only if it gets severe or persists for longer than five days. Loose bowel movements may also develop for a few weeks. Take the pain medicine as prescribed, but call if there is severe pain, or if there is any ongoing drainage or bleeding at the dressing areas.
8. When you get home, please call our office for a follow-up appointment in two to three weeks. If you have any questions, feel free to call us at any time.
9. Avoid direct sunlight to the incisions for about a year if you are concerned about the cosmetic appearance. Sun tanning of the incisions may cause more permanent darkening of your scar.