

## **Gallbladder surgery: Your recovery and what to expect at home.**

The course of your recovery will depend on many factors. The following instructions will help in guiding your recovery and answer many of the most common post operative questions. If you have additional questions or concerns, please call my office at 702-258-7788.

### **WOUND CARE:**

Your incision should remain dry and covered for 48hrs after surgery. At that time, you may remove any outer bandages to shower, taking care to wash around the incisions. If you have steri-strips (white tape-like coverings), leave them in place. They will typically fall off on their own in 1-2 weeks. If you have staples, you may feel more comfortable putting a light bandage back over your incision after you have showered. You may re-cover your incision if your clothing rubs uncomfortably, if you have an open wound or any drainage coming from the incision. Otherwise, leave it open to air and keep it as clean and dry as possible.

You may submerge your incisions in water –pools, bathtubs, etc. – 2 weeks after surgery

### **ACTIVITIES AND LIFESTYLE:**

- You may use stairs and take short walks. The distance of these walks should increase gradually every day. Many post operative complications, including pneumonia, can be avoided by getting up and walking around after surgery.
- Apply ice or a cold pack to the area around your incision(s) for 10 to 20 minutes at a time. Try to do this every 1 to 2 hours for the first 48 hours (when you are awake) or until the swelling goes down. Put a thin barrier between the ice and your skin.
- Avoid heavy lifting (no more than 15 pounds) for 3 weeks after surgery. Excessive lifting may lead to increased pain. You may resume driving when you are no longer taking pain medication.
- After surgery eat small meals for a couple of days. Chew well and eat slowly. Eat a low fat, low salt diet for the first 2 weeks. You can return to your normal diet after the first 2 weeks. If your stomach is upset, try bland, low-fat foods like plain rice, boiled chicken, toast, and yogurt. Some patients will develop some food intolerance. If you do not feel well after eating, pay attention to the foods you are eating and look for any patterns. Many patients cannot eat very greasy or fatty meals after gallbladder removal.

**Most people are able to return to work within 2-3 weeks after gallbladder surgery. Please contact my medical assistant if you need: FMLA/disability forms completed, a work release or have ANY other questions related to your post operative recovery period. 702-258-7788**

### **Medicine:**

Take pain medicines exactly as directed.

Use Ibuprofen (Motrin), Acetaminophen (Tylenol) and ice to treat the pain from surgery. Only use narcotic pain medication if this doesn't work.

After the first few days, most patients do well with just a combination of ibuprofen (Motrin) and acetaminophen (Tylenol), and can stop the narcotic pain medication. Read and follow all instructions on the label.

Many pain medicines have acetaminophen, which is Tylenol, including many prescription narcotics. Too much acetaminophen (Tylenol) can be harmful. Do not take more than 4000mg of acetaminophen within 24 hours.

**Stop the narcotic pain medicine as soon as possible. It can cause many side effects including constipation and nausea. Be sure to drink plenty of water and take stool softeners as directed to help avoid opioid-induced constipation.**

If you think your pain medicine is making you sick to your stomach:

Take your medicine after meals.

Ask your doctor for a different pain medicine.

**SEEK MEDICAL CARE IF:**

You have a continued fever >101.5.

Your pain gets worse or is not helped by medicine.

You experience frequent vomiting.

You have continued abdominal bloating.

You have expanding redness or swelling around any incision area.

You have foul-smelling drainage from any incision area.

You are unable to have a bowel movement for 3+ days

**CALL 911 ANYTIME YOU THINK YOU MAY NEED EMERGENCY CARE. FOR EXAMPLE, CALL IF YOU EXPERIENCE:**

- Trouble breathing.
- Severe belly pain.
- A loss of consciousness.
- Sudden chest pain.

Regards,

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