

## **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. Avoid very spicy or heavy meals for a couple of days.
2. Take scheduled non-narcotic pain medication for 2-3 days unless you are instructed otherwise. ***If there is no contraindication or documented allergy, the usually recommended schedule is 2 extra strength Tylenol tablets alternating with 3-4 ibuprofen tablets (600-800 MG) every 3 hours, always with a piece of toast or crackers. If you still experience severe pain, take the prescription narcotic pain medication, as needed and directed.*** Remember, narcotic pain medication should only be taken as needed for severe pain and if you already taken the scheduled non-narcotic pain medications. Pressure or discomfort does not warrant the use of narcotics. Narcotics may have serious side effects (constipation, dizziness, urinary retention, nausea, vomiting), may prolong your recovery and you are not allowed to drive if you take them.
3. 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 and lifting should be limited to 5-10 lb maximum weight during this period.
4. There are usually four small incisions covered by Dermabond (skin glue). Do not try to remove the Dermabond dressing – it will come off slowly over the course of 1-2 weeks.
5. You may shower on the day following surgery.
6. Some patients experience loose bowel movements following gallbladder surgery. This typically resolves in two weeks. Constipation may also develop 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 starting on the night of the surgery for 4-5 days or until you start having soft bowel movements. 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.
7. You may return to work without restrictions as soon as you feel able, usually within one to two weeks.
8. It is normal to feel some shoulder pain for a short time, it usually resolves in 2 days. Please call only if it gets severe or persists for longer than five days. 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.
9. 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.
10. 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.