



**Information for patients undergoing a
Laparoscopic Cholecystectomy**
(Removal of the gall bladder by keyhole surgery)

For any other information please contact either:

LGA:	02078814054
Lister Hospital Endoscopy Unit:	02077307733
Princess Grace Hospital Endoscopy Unit:	02074861234

London Gastrointestinal Associates

Tel: 02078814054 Fax: 02078814094 Email: info@londongiassociates.com

Introduction: Why do I need this operation?

Removal of the gall bladder is required for a number of conditions, but most commonly because of gallstones. Your operation should result in you being free from pain and able to eat a normal diet. It should also prevent the complications that having gallstones can cause.

How do gallstones occur?

Your liver produces fluid called bile that is concentrated and stored in the gallbladder. Bile helps to digest fats. Sometimes it becomes so thick that stones are formed. Gallstones can cause pain due to inflammation of the gallbladder or because they block the bile duct preventing the bile from emptying into the intestines. This pain can be very severe.

What are the symptoms?

Gallstones can cause severe symptoms, with repeated attacks of pain being the most common. If the gallstones move out of the gallbladder into the common bile duct they can cause jaundice, infection of the ducts or inflammation of the pancreas. These complications can be very serious.

The operation

You will normally have a general anaesthetic. When you are asleep, very small cuts will be made into the abdomen (stomach) where the surgeon places the surgical instruments. The abdomen is filled with gas and a small telescope allows the surgeon to see inside the abdomen while he removes the gallbladder with special instruments.

Open surgery

Occasionally it is not possible to perform the operation by keyhole surgery so a larger incision has to be made for the open technique. For this reason we will ask you to consent to both methods of surgery.

After the operation

When you wake up you may feel drowsy because of the general anaesthetic. You may also have some discomfort in your shoulders. This is a common side effect of having gas in your abdomen.

London Gastrointestinal Associates

Tel: 02078814054 Fax: 02078814094 Email: info@londongiassociates.com

You very occasionally have a small plastic tube and container (drain) coming out of you abdomen. This allows excess fluids to drain away making you more comfortable and reducing bruising. We will remove it before you leave hospital.

We will also give you painkillers during your surgery, but do ask your nurse for painkillers whenever you need them.

What about my wounds?

We will cover your wounds with a waterproof dressing that should be left in place for 5 days. If blood seeps around the dressing, place a dry dressing over the top of it. The stitches are placed deep in the skin and you can bath or shower immediately.

If there are paper strips (steristrips) over the wounds leave them in place – they will fall off in the bath or shower after 1-2- weeks. The stitches will dissolve over several weeks. If you have severe pain, redness or throbbing in the wound, or if the wound starts to ooze pus, inform your surgeon as you may have an infection.

How long will I be in hospital?

We will admit you on to your ward the day before your operation. As long as you make a good recovery you may go home the same day or following day after your operation. You will need to stay for a few more days if the open technique is used.

When will I be able to eat?

You will be able to start drinking clear fluids soon after the operation if you are not feeling nauseous. You may then progress to tea, coffee and soup. If you find these do not upset you, you can move on to light meals and then to a normal diet. If anything disagrees with you, avoid it for a day or two. You are the best judge of when you are ready to eat more.

When can I get back to normal?

You should get up and walk around the day after your operation, but do take things gently at first. The anaesthetic may make you feel sleepy and light-headed for up to 48 hours after the operation.

London Gastrointestinal Associates

Tel: 02078814054 Fax: 02078814094 Email: info@londongiassociates.com

When I get home

You may feel well enough to leave the house for short trips in three or four days. As this operation involves the muscles of the abdominal wall, you should avoid any heavy lifting or manual work for a few weeks.

Do not drive until you are confident that you can perform an emergency stop without discomfort. Do check with your insurance company as they may have rules about driving after surgery.

You may need between two and four weeks off work depending on the type of work you do. You can obtain a sick certificate from your GP.

Risks associated with this operation

Every operation has potential complications. General examples include:

- **Pain** – we will give you medication to control the pain and it is very important that you take it regularly as directed.
- **Bleeding** – this may occur either during or after surgery. Rarely this requires a blood transfusion or another operation.
- **Infection** – this may need treatment with antibiotics
- **Scarring** – there will be small scars at the site of the incisions. In some patients they may become unsightly due to infection or due to keloid formation.
- **Blood clots** – we will encourage you to get out of bed and move around soon after your operation to reduce the risk of clot formation. Some patients may require injections to further reduce this risk.

Specific risks with this operation include:

- **Diarrhoea** – this may occur as you no longer have a gallbladder controlling the flow of bile into the intestines.
- **Bile Duct injury** – this is very rare (<1 in 600) but if it does occur, you may need further surgery to correct the problem.
- **Leakage of bile** – may cause inflammation of the surrounding tissues and structures.
- **Damage to the liver** – again, this is very rare but you may need further surgery to correct the problem.

London Gastrointestinal Associates

Tel: 02078814054 Fax: 02078814094 Email: info@londongiassociates.com