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POSTOPERATIVE LAPAROSCOPIC CHOLECYSTECTOMY INSTRUCTIONS

You have just had a laparoscopic cholecystectomy. This procedure involves removing your gallbladder. This is done through four small incisions.

PAIN If your prescription was not faxed to your pharmacy upon discharge from the hospital, you will be given a prescription for pain medication. Because pain medication can be constipating, be sure to drink lots of fluids and eat plenty of fruits and vegetables. It will also be helpful to take a stool softener such as Colace Metamucil, or Citrucel once or twice a day, if you are constipated. If you are unable to have a bowel movement following surgery, a mild laxative such as Milk of Magnesia may be used. Being up and about after surgery is also helpful in regulating bowel function.

INCISION Your incisions are closed using a number of sutures below the skin surface. When you remove the outer dressing (see bathing instructions below for when to remove the dressing), you will find a special ribbed tape covering the incision. The ribbed tape will fall off on its own.

BATHING You are asked to keep the outer dressing over the incision dry and in place for 1 day following surgery. On the day after surgery, remove the dressing. It is now safe for you to get into the shower. Be careful not to scrub the incision lines, simply let the water run over the incision and gently pat the area dry.

ACTIVITY Following surgery, you are encouraged to do as much walking as is comfortable. You may climb stairs, taking them one at a time and slowly. You are not to operate a vehicle while you are having discomfort or taking pain medication. This will interfere with your ability to drive safely. Your surgeon will tell you when it is safe to resume driving. You are asked to not do any lifting over 30 pounds for the first two weeks following surgery. The doctor will tell you when it is safe to do more. If lifting causes pain in your incision, please stop. If pain persists, call the office and speak with the nurse.

PRECAUTIONS Although not commonly seen, any incision is susceptible to infection. If you develop a fever of 101 degrees or above, have unexpected pain, redness or drainage from any incision, please contact the office.

DIET You may eat a low fat diet as soon as you get home. Reintroduce fatty food into your diet slowly over a period of weeks to months to allow your body to recover from surgery.

FOLLOW-UP Please call the office a day or two after you go home to schedule your postoperative appointment for approximately two weeks after surgery.

If you have any questions about your recovery, please do not hesitate to call our office.