

# Laparoscopic Cholecystectomy

## post-operative instructions

Please read over this material carefully. While instructions may vary from patient to patient, the material should provide you with a general idea of things to do to help you get well after your surgery.

### **Activity**

You will likely feel tired for at least 1 week after your surgery. Take your pain medicine as needed in order to stay active, but rest as needed for recovery. Take short walks 2-3 times a day. This will help reduce the risk of blood clots following surgery. You may use the stairs as needed as long as you are not dizzy or weak. Make sure someone is around the first few times you use the stairs or exercise.

### **Driving**

Do not drive until you have been seen for your first post-operative clinic office visit. Unless told otherwise, you may drive after your first visit and when you can react safely in an emergency situation. You must not be taking pain medicines stronger than regular Tylenol® (acetaminophen) at the time you are driving, nor should you have a great deal of pain, as this will affect your ability to react quickly. Also: do not take Norco (hydrocodone with acetaminophen) or Tylenol #3 (acetaminophen with codeine) and Tylenol at the same time as Tylenol is all of them. If you are trying to take yourself off Tylenol #3 by switching to Tylenol, allow 6 hours between doses.

### **Lifting/Coughing**

Practice 10 deep breaths every hour and 2 coughs every hour, (for at least 12 hours a day), for the first week after surgery. This will decrease your risk of lung problems or pneumonia. Do not lift heavy objects (more than 10 pounds) for the first 4 weeks. Also avoid pushing, pulling or abdominal pressure for these first 4 weeks. When coughing, be sure to place a pillow over the incision and gently press inward to reduce the pressure (from coughing) on your incision.

### **Medications**

Use your pain medicine as prescribed. Pain medications may cause nausea on an empty stomach so we recommend you take with it food. Try to take fewer narcotic pain medicine each day. You may switch to plain Tylenol, Advil or Aleve as told by your surgeon after surgery. If you are feeling constipated and have not had a bowel movement by the 4th day after surgery, you may take 1 ounce of Milk of Magnesia in the morning.

### **Incisions**

Your incisions have been closed with dissolvable suture on the inside and a special skin glue over the incision. The glue may have been covered with band-aids. Remove all of the band-aids within 24 hours. The skin glue will dissolve on its own. Do not try to remove it from your skin. You may shower the day after surgery and allow clean, soapy water to run over your incision but do not soak your incisions in water (no hot tub, bathtub or swimming pools) for the first 6 weeks after surgery. Do not put any ointment or creams over the incisions for the first 6 weeks after surgery or while the incision is open,

Gary K. Alexander MD, FACS, CPE · Jeremy P. Parcels MD, FACS · Andrew B. Standerwick MD, FACS · Joshua K. Trussell MD, FACS, CPE

**Surgical Associates of Mansfield**  
2975 E. Broad Street · Suite 200 · Mansfield, TX 76063  
(682) 518-8619

draining or scabbed. Place an icepack over your incision areas for 20 minutes, 3 times a day for the first 5 days to control pain and decrease inflammation.

### **Diet**

You may have certain limits on your diet after your surgery. When you are able to return to normal food, you may wish to avoid fatty or heavy foods for the first few days. Some of these foods may cause diarrhea or nausea following surgery.

### **Follow Up**

You should follow up in the clinic 2 weeks after your surgery. You may be seen sooner if decided by the surgical team. Please call our office at (682) 518-8619 to schedule your follow up visits.

### **PRECAUTIONS — When Should I call the Physician?**

**Diarrhea:** Occasional loose bowel movements are not uncommon. However, constant watery diarrhea, especially with fever, can mean there is an infection of the bowels.

**Fever with or without cough:** This could be a sign of lung, wound or stomach infection.

**Elevated heart rate:** If your heart rate is more than 100 beats per minute, this could be a sign of infection.

**Sudden shortness of breath and/or chest pain:** This could be related to a heart problem, such as a heart attack, or could be related to a blood clot to the lung (pulmonary embolus) or a lung infection.

**Leg swelling and pain:** Blood clot formation in the leg, particularly if it is on one side, could cause swelling with pain in the calf.

**Passing out:** This could be a sign of low blood pressure, which could be caused by blood loss, low blood sugar or other causes.

**Wound drainage:** Gold or yellow colored drainage is normal. If you develop drainage from your wound that is thick, greenish-brown color, has a foul odor, redness, and/or tenderness, it may be a sign that your wound is infected. Call your doctor.

For urgent matters, you may call **(682) 518-8619** and ask for doctor. Please remove caller id block from your phone and refrain from using your phone so that the physician may return your call promptly.

Gary K. Alexander MD, FACS, CPE · Jeremy P. Parcels MD, FACS · Andrew B. Standerwick MD, FACS · Joshua K. Trussell MD, FACS, CPE

**Surgical Associates of Mansfield**  
2975 E. Broad Street · Suite 200 · Mansfield, TX 76063  
(682) 518-8619