



**RSim General & Colorectal Surgery**  
1 Farrer Park Station Road,  
#13-10, Farrer Park Medical Centre,  
Singapore 217562.  
Tel: (65) 6636 3493 Fax: (65)6636 3494

## **Laparoscopic Cholecystectomy**

### **What is a laparoscopic cholecystectomy?**

A laparoscopic cholecystectomy is a surgical procedure in which the doctor removes your gallbladder with a laparoscope and other surgical tools. A laparoscope is a long narrow tube with a camera on the end. Your doctor can put it into your abdominal cavity and see your internal organs such as your gallbladder.

### **When is it used?**

This procedure is performed when you have stones in your gallbladder. The gallbladder is shaped like a balloon and holds bile. Bile is produced in the liver and helps with digestion of foodstuffs in the intestinal tract. Bile can form a sediment in the bottom of the gallbladder and form gallstones. These stones may remain loose in your gallbladder, block the gallbladder, plug the common bile duct, or pass into your intestine. When the stones block the gallbladder neck, the flow of bile is partially blocked. When the gallbladder contracts it can cause abdominal pain. It may become swollen, infected, and/or start to decompose.

Alternatives include removing the gallbladder by open surgery without a laparoscope, having the stones dissolved with drugs, or having the stones broken up with a procedure called lithotripsy. This is a process that uses sound waves or ultrasonic waves to break up stones into tiny pieces so they can pass out of the body with stool. You could choose not to have treatment, recognizing the risks of your problem. You should ask your doctor about these choices.

### **How do I prepare for a laparoscopic cholecystectomy?**

Plan for your care and recovery after the operation. Allow for time to rest and try to find people to help you with your day-to-day duties.



**RSim General & Colorectal Surgery**  
1 Farrer Park Station Road,  
#13-10, Farrer Park Medical Centre,  
Singapore 217562.  
Tel: (65) 6636 3493 Fax: (65)6636 3494

Follow the instructions provided by the doctor. The night before the procedure, eat a light meal such as soup and salad. Do not eat or drink anything after midnight and the morning before the procedure. Do not even drink coffee, tea, or water.

### **What happens during the procedure?**

A general anesthetic is given. A general anesthetic will relax your muscles and make you feel as if you're in a deep sleep. It will prevent you from feeling pain during the operation.

Your peritoneal cavity is inflated with carbon dioxide gas. This expands your peritoneal cavity like a balloon and helps the doctor see your organs. The doctor makes three or more small cuts in your abdomen, puts in the gas, and uses the laparoscope to look in your abdomen and find the gallbladder. The doctor then removes your gallbladder and the stones with a laser or electrical cautery.

### **What happens after the procedure?**

You may leave the hospital later that day or in about 1 to 2 days, depending on your condition. You may return to a normal lifestyle within 4 to 5 days. There are usually no restrictions on lifting or exercising.

Ask your doctor what steps you should take and when you should come back for a checkup.

### **What are the benefits of this procedure?**

You will be rid of the painful gallbladder without the discomfort of abdominal surgery and the expense of a longer hospital stay.



## **What are the risks associated with this procedure?**

There are some risks when you have general anesthesia. Discuss these risks with your doctor.

- There is a risk of bleeding.
- The common bile duct or another nearby organ may be damaged and may need further surgery to repair it.
- The bile may leak. To correct this, the doctor may put in a drainage tube.
- You may get an infection in which case an appropriate drug is given, and/or the doctor may reopen the cut and put in a tube to allow the infection to drain.
- You may have pain in your shoulder. The pain is probably the result of using carbon dioxide to inflate your abdominal cavity.
- 

You should ask your doctor how these risks apply to you.

## **When should I call the doctor?**

### **Call the doctor immediately if:**

- You develop a fever.
- You are in a lot of pain.
- You develop nausea or vomiting.

### **Call the doctor during office hours if:**

- You have questions about the procedure or its result.
- You want to make another appointment.

---

Copyright © Clinical Reference Systems 1999

Adult Health Advisor

Women's Health Advisor

---