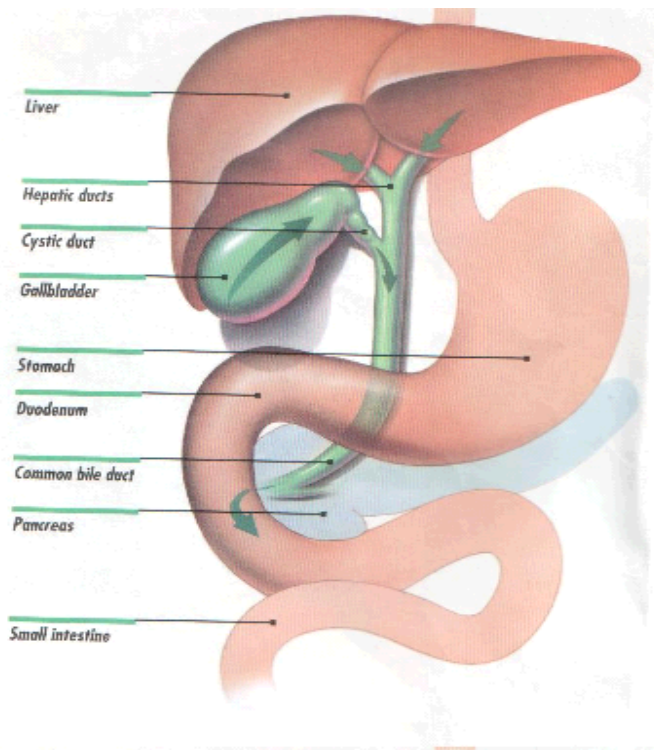


University General Surgeons, P.C.  
1932 Alcoa Hwy, Suite 270  
Knoxville, TN 37920

## LAPAROSCOPIC GALLBLADDER SURGERY



Your gallbladder is a small, pear-shaped organ located in the upper-right part of your abdomen under your liver. It is a storage site for bile, a fluid produced by the liver. Bile breaks down fats in the foods you eat and helps digestion. When needed, the bile is squeezed through ducts into the first part of your small intestine.

### **Gallstones**

The amounts of bile and other fluids inside the gallbladder can become unbalanced. When this happens, some of the chemicals become solid and

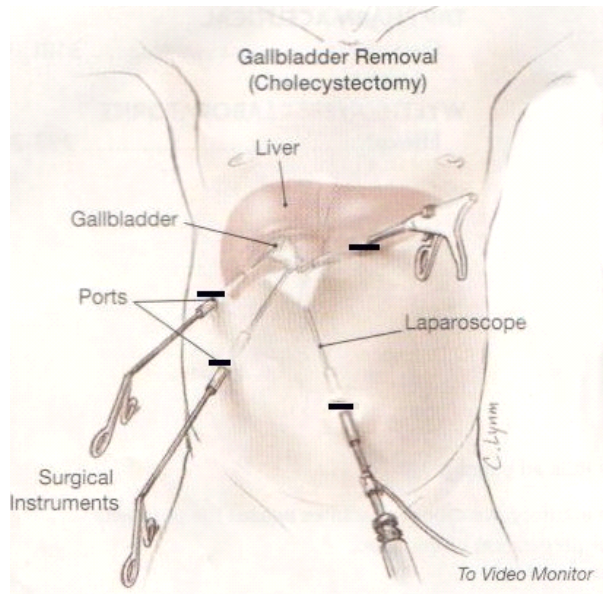
form gallstones. If the stones stay in the gallbladder they may irritate the gallbladder wall. They may also be “silent” and cause few or no symptoms. If the gallstones move and block ducts, bile can back up. This may lead to pain, nausea, infections, and diseases of the gallbladder, liver, or pancreas.

### **Treatment Plan**

After careful consideration of your symptoms, diagnostic tests, and physical exam, it has been determined that removal of the gallbladder is the best treatment for you. You don't need a gallbladder to live a healthy life.

Many people can have laparoscopic gallbladder removal instead of open surgery. But it may not be right for you if you have major scarring from a past surgery or a condition that will make it hard for your surgeon to see with the laparoscope. During the surgery, if the surgeon determines that it is unsafe to continue with the laparoscopic procedure, he or she will make an incision and open the abdomen so that the gallbladder and everything around it can be seen and dissected safely.

### **Laparoscopic Surgery**



With laparoscopic surgery, your surgery is performed through 4 tiny incisions approximately ½ inch long. Because the incisions are small the laparoscopic surgery offers several advantages: 1) less postoperative pain; 2) short hospital stay (usually outpatient); 3) minimal scarring; and 4) faster return to normal activity.

### **The Operation**

You will receive general anesthesia and be completely asleep for the operation. Your abdomen is inflated with a harmless gas to help the surgeon see and move inside your body. This gas is removed at the end of surgery. The laparoscope is inserted through one of the incisions. One end of the scope shines light inside your abdomen. The other is attached to a tiny camera, which lets the surgeon view your gallbladder. Special instruments are inserted through the other incisions and your gallbladder is removed through the small incision at your navel. The surgery usually takes 1-2 hours. Sometimes a special x-ray called a *cholangiogram* may be taken of your bile duct to check for stones. Any stones in the duct may be

removed at this time. The 4 tiny incisions are closed with dissolvable sutures under the skin and small strips of tape on the skin surface when the operation is completed.

### **After Surgery**

Most people go home the day of laparoscopic surgery and recover in less than a week. There is usually less pain than after open surgery because the incisions are small and no muscles are cut. After you heal, the scars will be nearly invisible. The plastic strips across your incisions should stay on until they are removed at your follow-up appointment. Keep your incisions clean and dry. You may shower. Pat your incisions dry and apply clean gauze if needed.

You may have some gas pains and bloating after surgery. This is common and can be relieved by walking. Your digestion should return to normal soon. When the gallbladder is removed, the liver continues to make bile and its steady flow into the intestine is enough to help digest a normal diet. Some people have loose stools but this usually resolves within a few weeks. No change in diet is necessary after removal of your gallbladder. However, you are advised to judge your own food tolerances and avoid those that produce digestive problems. Specific concerns can be discussed in our office.

You may walk around and even climb stairs at home, just don't overdo things. You may return to work when you feel comfortable. If your job involves strenuous physical activity you will want to wait until after your follow-up appointment with us. Your appointment will be 7-10 days after

your surgery. You will receive a prescription for pain medication after surgery. **DO NOT DRIVE** while taking strong pain medication.

### **When to Call Us**

You may notice slight bruising or swelling at one or more of your incisions (especially the navel), but please call us if:

- One or all if the incisions become red, hot, swollen, or drain colored fluid
- You develop a temperature higher than 101 degrees
- You have any questions

**University General Surgeons, P.C.**

**<http://www.utksurgery.com/>**

**865-251-4658**