RECOVERY AT HOME

Laparoscopic Cholecystectomy (Gallbladder Removal Surgery)

Your follow up appointment is about two (2) weeks after surgery. To confirm or change the appointment, call the office during normal business hours at 512.978.8130.

What to expect after surgery

- Don't make any big decisions for the next 24 hours.
- Do not drink alcohol/beer/wine (including cough syrups) for 24 hours and while taking narcotic pain medications (examples of narcotics include oxycodone, tramadol, and Dilaudid).
- Call your surgeon if you have:
  - Signs of infection, including fever higher than 101°F, spreading redness, pus, a lot of swelling, or drainage that soaks through your bandage.
  - You have more pain in your stomach, or you can't stop feeling sick or throwing up.
  - Trouble peeing (can't pee).
  - Trouble breathing.
  - Bleeding.

Activity

Walking

- Try to walk a little more each day. Start walking the day after surgery. Take breaks to rest, since you may get tired more easily than usual.
- It is OK to climb stairs.

Lifting

- Do not lift anything heavier than 15 pounds for four (4) weeks after surgery, unless your surgeon tells you something different.

Driving

- Do not drive until you are off all narcotic pain medications (examples of narcotics include oxycodone, tramadol, and Dilaudid) and you feel that you can slam on the brakes in an emergency.
- Usually, this means you are ready to drive about 1–2 weeks after surgery. If you are not sure you should start driving again, wait until your follow-up appointment and ask your doctor.

CENTRAL HEALTH

Showering

- You can take a shower two (2) days after surgery. If you have a bandage on your incision (cut), take it off before you shower. Let warm, soapy water run over the incision. After the shower, gently dry the area with a clean towel or paper towel. Do not put lotion or ointment on the incision.

Swimming

- Do not let your incision soak underwater for four (4) weeks after surgery, which means no swimming pools, hot tubs, or baths for four (4) weeks.

Diet

- You can eat regular food when you get home.
- Do not drink alcohol while taking narcotic pain medications.
- Drink plenty of water and eat foods with fiber like fruits, vegetables, and whole grains.
- You may find that fatty foods cause diarrhea after having your gallbladder removed. This is not harmful, but it can be annoying. If it bothers you, avoid fatty foods for 1–2 months after surgery, and gradually reintroduce them after that.

Wound care

- Keep the incision clean and dry. Do not put any lotion or ointments on the incision. Do not scratch the incision. You may have skin glue or steri-strips on your incision.
- If you have skin glue, do not pick at the skin glue. It will peel off on its own in 10–14 days.
- If you have steri-strips (small white bandages), these will fall off on their own after about 10–14 days. If they have not fallen off by then, you may remove the remainder.
- Some swelling and bruising around the incision is normal.
- Have someone look at the incision daily for two (2) weeks or take a picture daily so you can monitor the incision.

Medications

Take acetaminophen (Tylenol) and ibuprofen (Advil, Motrin) every six (6) hours. These are not narcotic pain medications.

- **Acetaminophen (Tylenol)**: Take 975 mg or 1,000 mg every six (6) hours as needed for pain. Your doctor may not prescribe this if you have liver disease.
- **Ibuprofen (Advil, Motrin)**: Take 600 mg every six (6) hours as needed for pain. Take it with food or milk. Your doctor may not prescribe this if you have kidney disease or take blood thinners.

For pain that is not controlled by acetaminophen (Tylenol) and ibuprofen (Advil, Motrin), you can take oxycodone. This is a narcotic pain medication and should be taken in addition to the acetaminophen (Tylenol) and ibuprofen (Advil, Motrin).

- **Oxycodone**: Take five (5) mg every six (6) hours as needed for pain that is not controlled by non-narcotic pain medications. This is a narcotic pain medication. Do not drive while taking this medication.

Narcotic pain medicine can make it hard to poop. Call the doctor if you haven't pooped for three (3) days or if you have bad stomach pain. If you have trouble pooping, you can take polyethylene glycol (Miralax), which you can buy over the counter. Take as directed on the bottle.



Pathology results

If any tissue was taken out during your surgery, test results will be shared at your follow-up appointment. If there is anything urgent or unexpected, your surgeon or someone from their team will call you sooner.



When to call your care team

For clinical concerns, reach out to your surgical team at 512.978.8130, option 2. You can reach us anytime, including nights and weekends. When you call, tell the team you are a Central Health patient and provide your surgeon's name. Our Central Health general surgeons are Dr. Catie Mavroudis (female), Dr. Jawad Ali (male), and Dr. Carlos Brown (male).



Use MyChart to message your care team about non-urgent concerns. **It may take up to two (2) business days for your care team to reply to your MyChart message.**

Call 911 anytime you think you may need emergency care.

For example, call if:

- You passed out (lost consciousness).
- You have sudden chest pain, shortness of breath, trouble breathing, or you cough up blood.
- You have a bad headache that won't go away, sudden muscle weakness, drooping in your face, trouble speaking, or changes in your vision.