Location
Your laparoscopic Gallbladder Surgery can be performed at one of several different locations. The choice of location for your surgery will depend on multiple factors including: location availability, your insurance, and your medical condition.

Length of Surgery
After you leave the pre-op area an additional 20-30 minutes is required for anesthetic and surgical preparation prior to the start of your surgery. In additions the length of surgery is quite variable. Times ranging from 1-2 hours are common, but surgery can extend for 3 hours or more in certain circumstances. After surgery you will spend 1-2 hours in the Recovery Room before returning to your room or being discharged. The total amount of time from arrival to discharge can therefore range from 5-8 hours.

The Operation
Laparoscopic Gallbladder Surgery typically requires 4 or 5 puncture wounds each approximately 1/2 inch in length. Less than 5% of all planned Laparoscopic Gallbladder operations have to be converted to an open operation. The most common reasons for converting are: 1) Severe inflammation of the gallbladder secondary to your gallstones 2) Abnormalities of bile duct anatomy 3) Scar tissue from previous surgery 4) Bleeding 5) Marked obesity.

If there is sufficient evidence that a stone could have passed into the common bile duct a cholangiogram will be attempted. This is a good, but not perfect, x-ray test used to identify common bile duct stones. If common bile duct stones are confirmed they can be handled in one of several ways. If conditions are appropriate an attempt can be made to Laparoscopically remove the stone/stones. An open surgical attempt at removal may be necessary in certain situations. However, the most common approach is to remove stones one or more days after surgery in a separate Endoscopic Procedure (ERCP) performed by a Gastroenterologist.

Open Gallbladder Surgery (by initial plan or conversion) requires a 5-10 inch incision on the right side or middle of your upper abdomen. The end results are the same, though the recovery from an open surgery is significantly longer.

Risks
Like all operations, Laparoscopic Cholecystectomies have risks. These include, but are not limited to, the risks of General Anesthesia and the surgical risks of: Injury to the common bile duct, Bile leakage, Retained common bile duct stones, Bleeding, Infection, Intestinal injury, and Pancreatitis. The chance of each of these surgical risks occurring is less than 1%. In general if you are healthy and have no significant medical conditions, your anesthesia risks are extremely small. If you have medical problems your risks of anesthesia may be more accurately defined by your anesthesiologist.

Recovery
After Laparoscopic Gallbladder surgery most patients will be discharged on the day of their surgery. After open surgery a hospital stay of 3-5 days is typical.

Diet
Immediately after surgery your diet should be simple and bland. There are no specific dietary restrictions related to having your Gallbladder removed. However, a diet which is low in fats and high in fruits, vegetables, whole grains and fiber is recommended for everyone.

Activity
After Laparoscopic Surgery you should begin walking as much as you can tolerate within 1-2 days after your surgery. There are no specific limitations on lifting, driving or returning to work. Most patients report being able to comfortably drive a car within 2-3 days after surgery and return to work in a week or less.
**Activity**

After open surgery you should gradually increase the amount of walking you do starting the day after your discharge from the hospital. You should avoid heavy lifting for 3-4 weeks and competitive sports for 6-8 weeks. If you plan to return to competitive sports after open surgery a 3-6 week controlled exercise program of progressively increasing intensity needs to be followed. Most patients report being able to drive 7-10 days after discharge (10-14 days after surgery) and return to a "desk" job 2-3 weeks after surgery. Sufficient recovery to resume physically demanding jobs may require 4-6 weeks and an appropriate exercise program.

**Bandages**

Keep your Band-Aides and bandages dry and in place for 1-2 days. You should then remove your bandages leaving your Steri-Strips (tapes) in place. When they begin to loosen on their own you may remove them.

**Bathing**

Until your bandages are removed keep them dry. After your bandages have been removed you may shower and wash the wound(s). Gently washing over the Steri-Strips should not cause them to come off prematurely. Do not soak in a tub or swim for 2 weeks after surgery.

**Sex**

You are unlikely to damage your surgery with sexual activity. Your comfort level will be the determining factor as to the appropriate time to resume sexual activity. Until you are pain free you and your partner will need to make appropriate adjustments.

**Medications**

Unless otherwise instructed you can resume previously prescribed medications immediately after surgery.

**Pain Relief:** Ibuprofen (Motrin) and Hydrocodone/Acetaminophen (Lortab, Norco or Vicodin) are routinely prescribed for the relief of post-operative pain. For maximum benefit both medications should be taken at the maximum frequency indicated by your prescriptions.

**Medication side Effects:** Ibuprofen can cause heart burn, acid indigestion or even peptic ulcers and should be avoided if these symptoms occur. Hydrocodone frequently causes drowsiness, may cause nausea, (especially on an empty stomach) and frequently causes constipation. Constipation can be treated by taking a laxative or prevented by taking supplemental fiber (Citrucel, Metamucil or others) and stool softeners (Colace, Surfak and Senekot). Should your pain be inadequately controlled or should you be unable to control the side effects, please call the office at (214) 827-5820 to discuss alternatives.

**Warning Signs**

Please notify the office if any of the following occur 1) Pain or swelling that increases over a period of days 2) Drainage that appears infected (thick, white or yellow in color and foul smelling) 3) Fever over 101.5 degrees or persistent/recurrent temperature over 100 degrees 4) Pink to bright red discoloration spreading more than 1/4 inch from the wound.

**Return Appointment**

Your follow-up care is important to us. Please arrange for an appointment in the office 7-14 days after surgery. Your wounds will be checked and your progress will be reviewed. If your follow-up appointment was not scheduled prior to surgery please call (214) 827-5820 promptly to schedule. There is no additional charge for routine post op care.

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