

# Laparoscopic Cholecystectomy

Day Surgery Unit

Surgical Short Stay Unit



Patient information leaflet

## What are gallstones?

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The gallbladder is a small pear-shaped organ tucked under your liver in the upper-right side of your abdomen. It stores bile, which is produced in the liver and released through the common bile duct to help you digest fatty foods.

Gallstones form when certain chemicals in the bile and other fluids solidify. Gallstones are very common and if they remain in the gallbladder, they may not cause major problems. However, if the stones move and block the exit of the gall bladder they can lead to episodes of nausea, vomiting, pain and inflammation. In addition, if stones move into the bile duct they can cause jaundice and occasionally acute pancreatitis, both of which are very serious conditions.

## What is a laparoscopic cholecystectomy?

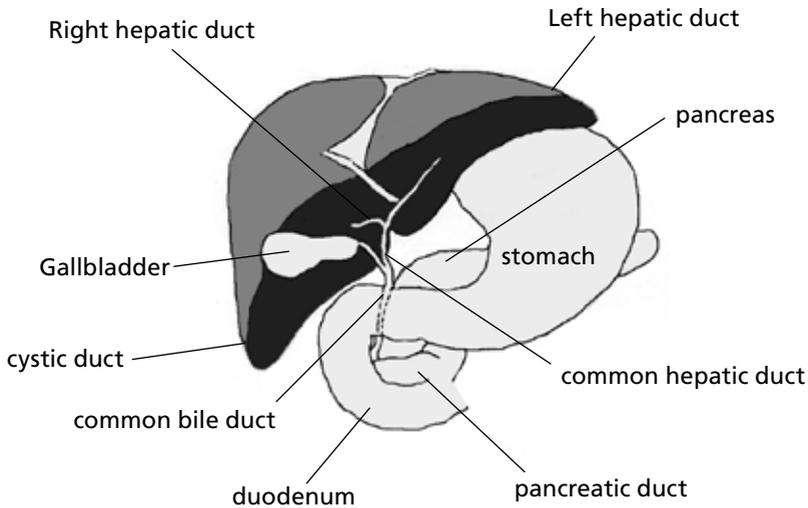
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This is an operation to remove the gallbladder using 'keyhole' surgery under a general anaesthetic. Four small cuts are made in the upper abdomen. A fibre-optic camera is passed through one cut with the others being used for the surgical instruments. The abdomen is 'inflated' with gas to allow a better view of the internal organs. This gas is removed at the end of the operation.

Metal clips are attached to the duct and blood vessel at the base of the gallbladder so that the gallbladder may be disconnected. These clips are harmless and will remain inside the body. The gallbladder itself is then guided to one of the cuts, emptied of any stones and then slipped through one of the cuts in the abdomen.

## Biliary System

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### Are there any alternative treatments?

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There are no other alternatives, surgery is the only treatment option for the removal of gallstones.

### After your operation

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#### Wound care

You will have dissolvable stitches in each wound. Keep the wounds covered, clean and dry for a week. You may then remove the dressings and shower or bath as normal.

Should your wounds become red, swollen, and very tender or start to produce a discharge, ring the ward or your GP for advice.

#### Will the surgery be painful?

Some pain or discomfort is to be expected following any type of surgery. You will be given painkillers while on the unit and some to take home. All medication dispensed by the unit, carries a prescription charge, unless you are exempt.

You may experience some shoulder tip pain after the operation. This will gradually diminish, and may be helped by sucking strong peppermints. You may also find gently walking around helps relieve the discomfort.

### **Exercise**

You should get out of bed and potter around the day after your surgery. Gradually increase your activities as comfort allows. Avoid strenuous exercise for at least two weeks.

### **Driving**

Do not drive for at least 24 hours following your anaesthetic. After this time you may drive when you are able to perform an emergency stop safely and comfortably. This may take 2 weeks.

The Driving Vehicle Licensing Agency (DVLA) advise that you check with your insurance company before you drive again.

### **Work**

It is advisable to have at least one week off work. You may return to work when you can perform your job comfortably and safely. The ward can provide you with a doctor's certificate to cover time off work if required.

### **Lifting and carrying**

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Wherever possible, avoid lifting and carrying as this can aggravate your surgery. Please avoid lifting objects that are heavier than 2lbs/1 kg for 2–4 weeks. This includes carrying shopping, household cleaning and heavy gardening.

Where lifting is unavoidable (small children etc.), bend your knees and not your back. Keep your feet shoulder width apart and carry the load close to your body. Bend at the knees to put the load down.

## Further appointments

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An outpatients appointment will be forwarded to you through the post if required.

**These notes do not cover everything.** If you want to know more, please ask.

## Reference source

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[www.nhs.uk/conditions/Laparoscopiccholecystectomy/Pages/Introduction.aspx](http://www.nhs.uk/conditions/Laparoscopiccholecystectomy/Pages/Introduction.aspx)





## Contact details

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If you require further advice, please do not hesitate to contact us.

### Day Surgery Unit

**Telephone:** 01483 406783 (Monday–Friday, 8am–6pm)

### Surgical Short Stay Unit

**Telephone:** 01483 406828 (Monday–Friday, 8am–6pm)

### Out of hours advice

**Telephone:** Call 111 (formerly NHS Direct)

**Website:** [www.nhsdirect.nhs.uk](http://www.nhsdirect.nhs.uk)

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## PALS and Advocacy contact details

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Contact details of independent advocacy services can be provided by our Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS) who are located on the right hand side as you enter the main reception area. PALS are also your first point of contact for health related issues, questions or concerns surrounding RSCH patient services.

**Telephone:** 01483 402757

**Email:** [rsc-tr.pals@nhs.net](mailto:rsc-tr.pals@nhs.net)

**Opening hours:** 9.00am–3.00pm, Monday to Friday

If you would like information documents in large print, on tape or in another language or form please contact PALS.

Past review date: March 2018

Future review date: March 2021

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**PIN180328–1500**

