Laparoscopic
Gallbladder Surgery
Laparoscopic Gallbladder Surgery

Your gallbladder is a pear-shaped sac. It is tucked under your liver in the upper right part of your abdomen. Bile, which digests fat, is made all the time in your liver. The bile then travels through a duct to your gallbladder. Bile is stored in your gallbladder.

Gallstones form in much the same way as pearls grow around a few grains of sand in an oyster. They begin with tiny particles and the bile gradually forms stones. Gallstones come in all sizes, shapes, and quantities.
Surgery
The surgeon will make 4 tiny incisions (cuts) or punctures to take out your gallbladder using a scope. You may hear the healthcare team refer to the surgery as a “lap chole”. This stands for ‘laparoscopic cholecystectomy’. On rare occasions, the surgery can’t be completed with the scope and an incision is made in your abdomen to open up the area as needed. This is called open gallbladder surgery.

Some words your healthcare team may use:
Bile: This clear yellow or green liquid is made by your liver and helps you digest your food.
Diaphragm: It is a large, strong muscle which separates your chest from your abdomen.
Laparoscopic: This procedure is done using a special kind of telescope through the wall of your abdomen.
Steri Strips®: Small pieces of tape are used instead of stitches to close the incision.
After surgery

Meals
• You may drink full fluids when you go home.
• You will be able to eat regular meals 24 hours after your surgery.

Care of the incision
• Steri-Strips® have been placed on the puncture wounds. They can be peeled off when they get loose. This is usually about 7-10 days after your surgery.
• You may shower 24 hours after surgery. Lightly dab the incision dry. You can have a bath after the incision has healed in 7-10 days.

Activity
• Try to get up and walking the day of surgery. Cut back on your activity if you are uncomfortable and/or have pain.
• To prevent pneumonia, breathe deeply and cough regularly.
• Over the following week, gradually do more as you feel able.
• Vacuuming, heavy lifting (over 15 pounds), straining and strenuous (hard) activities including sports should be avoided for 1 week. After 1 week, you may go back to all your usual activities.
• How soon you can return to work will depend on your type of work as well as your general health and recovery. Usually you can return to work after 1 week.

• You may go back to having sex whenever you feel comfortable doing so.

Discomfort
• You may feel some discomfort in your shoulder and neck area. This is normal. It is caused by the gas placed into your abdomen during the surgery. This gas is irritating to your diaphragm and this discomfort may be “referred to” (felt in) your shoulder area. It will get better in 1-2 days and may be relieved with activity.

• Take medication as prescribed by your doctor.

• If no pain medication is prescribed, you may take plain Tylenol® for discomfort as directed on the bottle.

• Do not drink alcohol while taking pain pills.

Follow-up
• It may take 3-4 days before your bowels start to move normally. You may have loose stools (bowel movements) or diarrhea until your body adjusts to not having your gallbladder. This may take from a few days to several weeks.

• Keep all follow-up appointments with your doctor.
Call your doctor if you have:

• Fever or chills
• Vomiting
• Redness, swelling, or warmth around the incisions
• Drainage from the incisions
• Abdominal pain that gets worse

If you cannot contact your surgeon or family doctor, you can call the hospital locating at 902-473-2222 and ask to speak with the General Surgery resident on call. If you can’t reach any of the doctors listed above, go to an Emergency Department.

If you have any questions, please ask.
We are here to help you.
Looking for more health information? Contact your local public library for books, videos, magazines, and other resources. For more information go to http://library.novascotia.ca

*Capital Health promotes a smoke-free, vape-free, and scent-free environment. Please do not use perfumed products. Thank you!*

**Capital Health, Nova Scotia**  
www.cdha.nshealth.ca

*Prepared by: Same Day Surgery*  
*Illustration by: LifeART Super Anatomy 1 & 4 Images, Copyright © 1994, TechPool Studios Corp. USA*  
*Designed by: Capital Health Library Services, Patient Education Team*  
*Printed by: Dalhousie University Print Centre*

The information in this brochure is provided for informational and educational purposes only. The information is not intended to be and does not constitute healthcare or medical advice. If you have any questions, please ask your healthcare provider.

WI85-0298 Revised September 2014  
The information in this pamphlet is to be updated every 3 years.