

Surgical Services of Athens

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Laparoscopic Gallbladder Surgery Post-Operative Instructions

- A post-operative visit has been arranged as noted in your paperwork. You may call the office during business hours to verify your post-operative visit date and time if needed. Office hours are 8am-12pm and 2pm-5pm Monday through Thursday and 8am-12pm on Friday.
- Your incisions are typically closed with absorbable sutures and are covered with Steri-strips, which are a white tape-like dressing applied directly on the skin. These strips are covered with a Bandaid or a Tegaderm (a clear dressing). You may remove the Band aids or clear dressings the day after surgery, but please try to leave the Steri-strips intact until they gradually lose adhesion and fall off. Do not panic if the Steri-strips fall off.
- If you have a drain in place, please strip the drain tubing as instructed twice daily, and empty the bulb and record the output from the drain. Please bring your output log to the post-op office visit. It is normal to leak some watery fluid around the drain site, especially the first few days after surgery. We recommend that you take a dose of pain medication about 1 hour prior to the office visit if you anticipate drain removal during the visit.
- We recommend a trial of liquids at least for the first meal after surgery. If there is no significant nausea or vomiting, then you may progress to solids as tolerated. Be aware that fried or fatty foods may lead to loose stools soon after gallbladder surgery.
- Prescription pain medication may cause nausea and will often cause constipation.
- The on-call physician will not be able to provide narcotic pain medication. By law, narcotic pain medication cannot be called in to a pharmacy.
- You may take an over the counter laxative as needed. It is normal to “feel” constipated after surgery for a few days.
- Notify us for fever over 101, or go to the nearest ER immediately for significant shortness of breath.
- Driving after surgery is not recommended until prescription pain medication is no longer needed. You may typically drive if narcotic pain medication has not been taken within 24 hours.
- You may shower the day after surgery, but if a drain is in place, you should keep the drain insertion site dry. The Steri-strips are water-resistant. Pat the incisions dry after the shower. You should avoid bathing in a bathtub or swimming until cleared by your surgeon.
- Some redness around the incision is expected and does not require antibiotics; however, if the redness significantly expands in size or if a surgical site becomes increasingly tender, please call for further instruction.
- Do not take Tylenol (acetaminophen) within 4 hours of taking a narcotic pain medication.
- We recommend that you avoid strenuous activity until your follow-up visit, but regular walking is encouraged.
- An on-call physician is available at all times for emergencies; however, we ask that you call during business hours for non-emergent and routine questions.