



## Discharge Instructions for Open Cholecystectomy (Gallbladder Removal)

You have had a procedure known as an open cholecystectomy. This is a procedure to remove the gallbladder through an incision in your belly. You either had a vertical (up-and-down) incision in the middle of your belly or a crosswise incision in the upper-right part of your belly beneath your ribs. You can live a full and healthy life without your gallbladder. This includes eating the foods and doing the things you enjoyed before your gallbladder problems started. Here are guidelines for home care after surgery.

### Home care

Recommendations for home care include the following:

- Ask someone to drive you to your appointments for the next week. Don't drive until you are no longer taking pain medicine and can step on the brake pedal without hesitation.
- Don't worry if you feel tired for the first couple of weeks after your operation. Fatigue is common.
  - Nap when you feel tired.
  - Get plenty of rest.
- Walk around the house, do office work, climb stairs or ride in a car if you feel able to do so.
- Don't do any strenuous physical activities, heavy lifting (nothing heavier than 10 pounds) or sports for four weeks after surgery.
- Eat your normal diet. If your health care provider recommends a low-fat diet, ask for menus and other diet information.
- Gently wash the skin around your incision daily with mild soap and water.
- If there is gauze dressing on your incision, change it daily or as often as necessary to keep it dry and clean.
- You may take a shower (even if there is a surgical drain in place), unless your health care provider gives you different directions.
- Don't sit in a bathtub, swimming pool or hot tub until the incision is closed and any surgical drains are removed.

### When to call your health care provider

Call your health care provider right away if you have any of the following:

- Yellowing of your skin or eyes (jaundice)
- Chills
- Fever of 100.4°F (38.0°C) or higher, or as directed by your health care provider
- Redness, swelling, increasing pain, pus or a foul smell at the incision site
- Dark or rust-colored urine
- Stool that is clay-colored or light in color instead of brown
- Nausea and vomiting
- Increasing belly pain
- Rectal bleeding
- Leg swelling or trouble breathing



**SURGICAL  
SPECIALISTS  
OF SPOKANE**

A DIVISION OF COLUMBIA SURGICAL SPECIALISTS

217 W Cataldo Ave  
Spokane, WA 99201

9922 N Nevada  
Spokane, WA 99218

13414 E Mission Ave  
Spokane Valley, WA 99216