Laparoscopy
(For General Surgery Procedures, eg. appendectomy)

Discharge Instructions
General Information

Laparoscopic surgery is performed for a variety of diagnostic and treatment reasons. Your doctor will discuss this with you.

The Procedure

A general anesthetic is necessary to relax the abdominal muscles, so you will be asleep for the procedure. A small cut (incision) is made in the abdomen. Carbon dioxide is introduced to allow viewing of the inside of the abdomen. A laparoscope is a lighted telescope, which is inserted through the incision. 2 to 4 more small cuts are made for instruments to be inserted.

At the end of the operation, your incision may be injected with a local anesthetic (“freezing”). This will provide some pain relief for about 3 to 4 hours after surgery.

Important Points in Treatment

Bleeding
- A small amount of bleeding from the incisions is normal for 1 to 2 days.
- If increased bleeding occurs, apply firm steady pressure over the area for 10 to 15 minutes or until the bleeding stops.

Dressings

You will have 3 to 4 small incisions. Your incisions may be covered in one of the following ways:

1. Open to air and held together with small tapes (steri-strips), bandaids, stitches or staples and covered with small gauze dressings.
   - If you have Band-Aids or tapes on your abdomen, leave them on until they fall off (unless otherwise ordered by your surgeon). You may use band-aids if clothing rubs.

2. Light Gauze Dressing
   - Change the dressings if they get wet or soiled. Use a similar light gauze dressing that can be purchased at any drug store.
   - You can remove the dressings in 2-3 days. If there is still any drainage from the incisions, replace with a new bandage.

3. Stitches or Staples, if present
   - Staples are removed by your surgeon or your family doctor, at your follow-up visit.
   - Any stitches will dissolve in 7 to 10 days.
Showering
• Keep the area dry for 48 hours after your operation, unless your surgeon tells you otherwise.
• You may shower in 2 to 3 days if the incision is dry and healing, unless your surgeon tells you otherwise. Gently pat the wound area with a towel. **DO NOT RUB!**
• **Do NOT take a bath** or soak the incisions. Until then, sponge bath.
• After removing the dressing, if there is still any drainage from the incisions, replace with a new bandage.

Pain
• You may have some minor discomfort or cramping in your lower abdomen.
• The gas that was placed inside your abdomen during surgery may cause some **chest or shoulder discomfort** for 24 to 48 hours. Lying flat may help.
• You may also notice your abdomen is slightly **bloated**, again due to the gas. It should become less within 48 hours.

Medications
• You may receive a prescription for pain medication. Some of these medications cause **drowsiness and constipation**.
• Do not drink alcohol when taking pain medication.

Diet
• Eat light, easily digested foods for the first day or so, to minimize abdominal gas.
• Pain medication often causes constipation. To minimize this, eat fruit, vegetables, and whole grains as tolerated, and remember to drink plenty of fluids. You may also use a mild laxative or a stool softener if constipation is a problem (ask your pharmacist).
• Remember that a well balanced diet is important for wound healing.

Activities
• When you return home from the hospital, rest for the remainder of the day.
• For the next 2 days, spend about half the day resting. You can also walk around your home.
• Resume normal activity gradually over the next 3 to 5 days.

**DO NOT:**
• lift anything heavier than 10 pounds (eg. heavy bags of groceries, children) for about one week after surgery or as advised by your surgeon.
• resume sports activities until okayed by your surgeon.

Follow-Up Appointment
Contact your surgeon’s office to arrange for an appointment.
Notify the Doctor or Go to the Emergency Department if any of the following happens:

- chills and/or fever over 38.5°C or 101.2°F
- burning on urination
- worsening abdominal pain especially with bloating
- continued nausea and vomiting
- incision redness, pus-like (yellow or green) drainage or swelling
- inability to urinate within 6 to 8 hours after surgery