

## Surgery and Cancer Division – General Surgery

### Laparoscopic cholecystectomy (keyhole removal of gallbladder)

#### Introduction

The Covid pandemic has had a significant impact on the NHS ability to provide routine elective services. We recognise that patients are waiting longer than we would all like and it is not always possible to identify when treatment will take place. This document provides you with information on how you can support yourself while waiting to attend the hospital. The guidance has been written by clinicians who are responsible for your care.

#### Guidance for Patients

Your doctor has recommended an operation called laparoscopic cholecystectomy. This is an operation to remove the gallbladder using keyhole surgery.

The gallbladder sits under the liver, in the right upper part of the abdomen. It is attached to the bile duct, and it stores bile between meals. Bile is a green liquid made by the liver and it drains from the liver to the intestine through the bile duct. When we eat, particularly fatty foods, the gallbladder empties the stored bile into the bile duct and from there into the intestine where it mixes with the food. Bile has many functions, one of which is to help us to absorb fat.

**Gallstones** are small stones, usually made of cholesterol, that form in the gallbladder.

Common indications for a laparoscopic cholecystectomy are gallstones causing pain or complications:

- cholecystitis (inflammation of the gallbladder)
- pancreatitis (inflammation of the pancreas)
- blockage of the bile ducts causing jaundice
- cholangitis (inflammation of the bile ducts)

The only way to remove the stones permanently is to have an operation that removes the gallbladder. Other treatments have been tried but have not been very successful and they are not widely used. Removal of the gallbladder is not associated with any impairment of digestion in most people.

While waiting for your procedure, a low-fat diet might help you with your symptoms. Maintaining a healthy weight will help reduce the risk of complications after surgery and allow you to recover quicker.

You will be provided with a written information leaflet that details the procedure and its potential complications.

## What should I do if my health is deteriorating?

Please contact your GP or NHS 111 if you experience:

- an increase in the severity or frequency of your original symptoms
- severe pain
- high temperature
- persistently feeling sick or vomiting
- yellow discoloration of your skin and whites of your eyes (jaundice)
- dark urine and pale stools

They will be able to advise if this is something they can support you with during your wait, or they will be able to direct you to the appropriate service to determine a management plan.

## Contact Us

Admission Date - Please contact the General Surgery Scheduling Team 01270 278303  
Upper GI Consultants PAs – via Leighton Hospital Switchboard,  
[MCHTPatientHelpline@mcht.nhs.uk](mailto:MCHTPatientHelpline@mcht.nhs.uk)