

Upper GI – Gallbladder Removal

Introduction

Gallbladder removal surgery, also known as a cholecystectomy, is a very common procedure.

The gallbladder is a small, pouch-like organ in the upper right part of your tummy.

It stores bile, a fluid produced by the liver that helps break down fatty foods.

You don't need a gallbladder, so surgery to take it out is often recommended if you develop any problems with it.

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.

Guidance for Patients

There are 2 main ways of removing a gallbladder:

- laparoscopic (keyhole) cholecystectomy – several small cuts (incisions) are made in your tummy (abdomen) and fine surgical instruments are used to access and remove your gallbladder
- open cholecystectomy – a single larger incision is made in your tummy to access and remove your gallbladder

Keyhole surgery is used most often because you can leave hospital sooner, recover faster and are left with smaller scars than with an open procedure.

Both techniques are performed under [general anaesthetic](#), which means you'll be asleep during the operation and won't feel any pain while it's carried out.

[Find out more about how gallbladder removal surgery is performed](#)

It doesn't usually take long to recover from keyhole surgery to remove your gallbladder.

Most people can leave hospital the same day or the next morning.

You'll probably be able to return to most of your normal activities within 2 weeks.

It takes longer to recover from open surgery. You may need to stay in hospital for 3 to 5 days and it could be 6 to 8 weeks before you're feeling back to normal.

[Find out more about recovering from gallbladder removal surgery](#)

My Planned Care Patient Information Platform

What should I do if my health is deteriorating?

Urgent Health Advice

For urgent health advice about physical or mental health, when it's not an emergency, please call 111 from any landline or mobile phone. You can also visit www.nhs.uk. The NHS 111 service is available 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

Life Threatening Emergencies

For something life threatening –severe bleeding, breathing difficulties or chest pains –please dial 999.

GP surgeries are still open

GP practice staff are also helping patients to manage their conditions at home while they wait for hospital appointments. GP surgeries are still open and are working differently to how they did before the COVID-19 pandemic and GP practices continue to make best use of telephone, online and video consultations. Face-to-face appointments are still being given to those who need it. When you phone or use an online form to contact your GP surgery to make an appointment, you will be asked some questions which are designed to help staff guide you to the most appropriate clinical person to help you with your condition. This could be a nurse, clinical pharmacist, physician's associate, GP or paramedic.

Contact Us

Via Switchboard on 01384 456111 and ask for General Surgery Secretaries