

Gallbladder Removal: Laparoscopic Cholecystectomy

What is a laparoscopic cholecystectomy?

A laparoscopic cholecystectomy is a surgery to remove your gallbladder.

The liver and gallbladder are part of your digestive system. The liver makes bile that helps your body break down the fat in food. Ducts carry bile to the gallbladder and small intestine. The gallbladder is a small sac under your liver on your right side that stores bile.

When is it used?

Your gallbladder may need to be removed if you have:

- Gallstones or a serious infection in your gallbladder. Gallstones are hard stone-like objects that build up in the gallbladder. If stones completely block the gallbladder or bile duct, the flow of bile out of the liver can also be blocked. This causes swelling, irritation, and pain in your liver, your gallbladder, or both. If not treated, swelling can cause your gallbladder to burst, or you could get a serious infection. Both can be life-threatening.
- Damage to your gallbladder from an accident or a long-term illness
- Gallbladder cancer

How do I prepare for this procedure?

Your healthcare provider will talk about your choices for treatment and explain the procedure and any risks. You should understand what your healthcare provider is going to do and how long it will take you to recover. You have the right to make decisions about your healthcare and to give permission for any tests or procedures.

Ask your healthcare provider if there are instructions you need to follow before the procedure. Your instructions may include:

- Changes to how you take your medicines
- What you can eat and drink before surgery
- Quitting smoking if you smoke
- Getting other tests or procedures
- Finding someone to give you a ride home after the procedure
- Other steps to follow before surgery

Tell your healthcare provider if you have any food or medicine allergies. Also tell your provider about all medicines and supplements that you take.

Your provider may give you instructions to follow after the procedure. They may include:

- Caring for your surgical wound

- Taking medicines to relieve pain, prevent infection, or treat other problems
- Avoiding some activities for a while
- Symptoms or problems to watch for and what to do if you have them
- When you can return to your normal activities
- When to come back for a checkup

What happens during this procedure?

The procedure will be done at the hospital.

You will be given medicine called anesthesia to keep you from feeling pain. General anesthesia relaxes your muscles and you will be asleep during the procedure.

Your healthcare provider will make several small cuts in the belly. Your provider will use a lighted tube with a camera called a laparoscope to help see inside the belly. Your provider will remove the gallbladder. Your provider will then close the cuts in your belly.

What happens after this procedure?

Usually you can leave the hospital later the same day. In some cases you may need to stay overnight.

You may have some pain, nausea, vomiting, or constipation after the procedure. Your healthcare provider may give you medicine or recommend other ways to treat these problems.

Removal of your gallbladder should cause few, if any, long-term problems because your digestive system can work well without it. You may have looser bowel movements after its removal.

What are the risks of this procedure?

Every procedure or treatment has risks. Some possible risks of this procedure include:

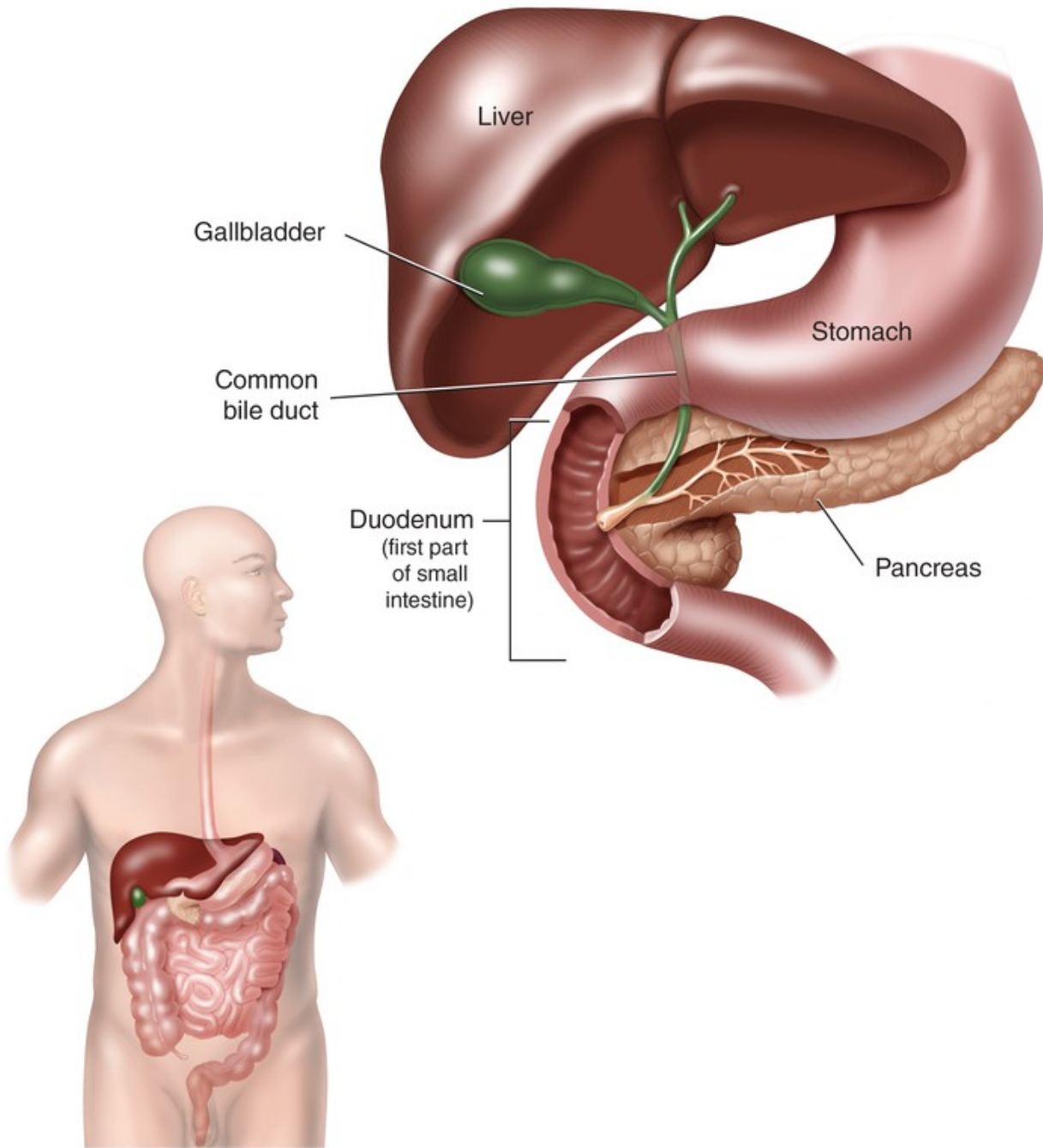
- Problems with or side effects from anesthesia
- Infection, bleeding, or blood clots
- Damage to other organs

Ask your healthcare provider how the risks apply to you. Be sure to discuss any other questions or concerns that you may have.

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Liver, Gallbladder, and Pancreas



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