

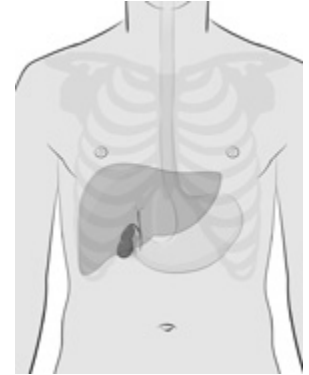
# North Bay Regional Health Centre

## Surgical Care Centre Cholecystectomy – Gallbladder Removal

Cholecystectomy (Gallbladder removal) is one of the most commonly performed surgical procedures.

### What is the Gallbladder?

- The gallbladder is a pear-shaped organ that is located under the liver.
- It stores a digestive liquid (bile) produced by the liver. After eating, the gallbladder empties the bile into the small intestine through small tubes (bile ducts). This helps with digestion.



### Why is the gallbladder removed?

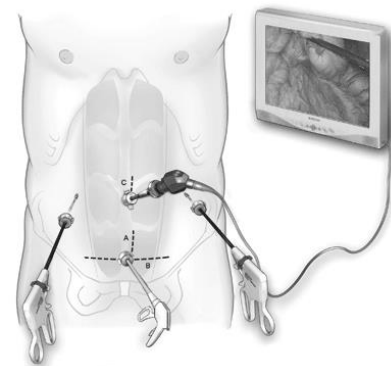
Gallbladder problems are usually caused by gallstones. These are small stones which form in the gallbladder. These stones can block the bile ducts and cause pain, vomiting, indigestion, and other symptoms. Other reasons to remove the gallbladder include complications from gallstones like blocking the bile duct, pancreatitis (inflammation of the pancreas), cholecystitis (inflammation), gallbladder cancer, porcelain (calcified) gallbladder, and gallbladder polyps.

### How is the gallbladder removed?

There are 2 main ways to remove the gallbladder:

**1) Open Surgery:** The surgeon makes a single large incision in your belly and removes the gallbladder.

**2) Laparoscopic Surgery:** The surgeon makes small incisions and uses a camera. This allows the surgeon to see inside the abdomen while performing the operation. The gallbladder and its contents will be removed through one of the incisions. The incisions will be covered with small dressings.



## **After Surgery:**

- It is normal to experience cramping (gas) in your abdomen for 2 to 3 days.
- It is also normal to experience mild pain at your incision sites as well as in your shoulders.

## **Recovery:**

- Most patients who have a laparoscopic gallbladder removal go home from the hospital on the same day as surgery.
- Walking and light activities are encouraged to help with healing.
- Heavy lifting, sports, and swimming are to be avoided until the surgeon says you may do them.
- You may need help with groceries, driving, and household activities during your recovery.

## **Important Reminders:**

- Wear loose fitting pants or shorts on the day of your surgery.
- You will need to have Acetaminophen (Tylenol) extra strength (500 mg), Ibuprofen (Advil, Motrin) 200mg, and Dimenhydrinate (Gravol) 50 mg at home to help with pain and discomfort after your surgery.
- Arrange to have someone drive you home and stay with you for 24 hours.

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