
SURGICAL ONCOLOGY

SPLENECTOMY

What is a Splenectomy?

A Splenectomy is the surgical removal of the spleen.

Why is a splenectomy recommended for me?

Your surgeon has recommended a splenectomy because your spleen is abnormally enlarged or because you are having part of your pancreas removed. When the tail of the pancreas is removed, the spleen is oftentimes unable to be left due to the pancreas and spleen having a shared blood supply. Other reasons will be discussed with you by your surgeon.

Surgery

Surgery is usually scheduled for 4 hours, although it may take more or less time. Your family will be updated on your progress while you are in surgery. If surgery is scheduled as laparoscopic, (minimally invasive with several small incisions), there is always the possibility that a larger incision will need to be made. (Exploratory laparotomy)

Hospital Recovery

- The average hospital stay is 5-7 days
- You will have an IV in your arm. This may be needed for the duration of your hospital stay.
- You will have a catheter in your bladder until you are more awake, alert and able to urinate.
- You can be discharged from the hospital once your pain is controlled with pills instead of IV medications, you are passing gas and are able to eat and drink.
- Most patients will have visiting nurses come visit them at home.
- Some patients need physical therapy to help them rebuild strength.
- You will receive printed discharge instructions from the hospital with information about incision care and what medications to take.
- Lifting restrictions will also be discussed.

Important Considerations

- The spleen is part of the body's defense system against infections. Without the protection of the spleen, your risk of infection or illness is increased for your lifetime and is greatest for the first 3 years after surgery.
- Please contact your primary care physician;
 1. Before any invasive procedure or dental procedure
 2. Prior to traveling abroad
 3. To discuss follow-up vaccine schedule. (Some vaccines are recommended every 5 years such as the pneumonia and meningitis vaccines).
 4. Please call your primary care physician immediately if a fever develops.

Immunizations (Shots)

Three different immunizations are needed to boost the body's immune functions. The ideal timing is two weeks before or two weeks after surgery. They are Haemophilus Influenza B, Pneumococcal and Meningococcal vaccines.

Where to Get Immunizations

The Kalamazoo County Health Department has been the only local resource to carry all 3 injections. You will be given an order to take with you. Other health departments or physician offices *may* have them available as well. The Kalamazoo County Health Department will accept insurance, but if your co-pay is too much for you to afford, immunizations can be given at the hospital prior to your discharge. (Please see separate handout for Kalamazoo County Health Department information).

Post-Operative Appointment

Please call the office at (269) 384-8663 to schedule a post-operative appointment once you have been discharged from the hospital and are back at home. We want to know that your pain is controlled and that your symptoms are managed. If you still have staples on your incision, they will be removed at your post-op appointment.

Questions

Please call anytime during normal business hours at (269) 384-8663 if you have any questions or concerns. Should you start running low on your medications, please call our office as soon as possible to notify us. Please do not wait until you are completely out.

After Hours/Emergency

Please call (269) 382-2500 and the answering service will contact your physician or whoever is taking call for your physician.