

Laparoscopic Surgery

What is a laparoscopy?

The laparoscope is a rod like miniature telescope made of fibre optics that emits light from its end and projects an image on to a television monitor. It can be inserted into the abdomen through a hollow tube or port. It is usually placed just below the belly button (umbilicus) through a small incision about 1 centimetre long. With the abdomen, distended by carbon dioxide, allows the surgeon to inspect the abdominal contents from the inside without having to make a long cut in the abdominal wall.

What is laparoscopic surgery?

Laparoscopic surgery (or minimally invasive surgery) is a method of performing an operation through the 'key hole'. Once the camera or laparoscope has been inserted, other, usually smaller ports can be placed elsewhere in the abdomen through which instruments on sticks can access the abdominal cavity. With the surgeon able to see on a television monitor the operation can be performed using these miniature instruments without having to create painful wounds which would otherwise be required to allow the surgeons hands and instruments inside.



How painful is it and what can be done to relieve the pain?

Because the operation is performed without the bigger cuts associated with open surgery pain is usually much less. The need for strong pain killers such as opiates is very much reduced and patients recover quicker. Most patients require only a few days of oral pain killers such as paracetamol or ibuprofen.

How long will I have to be in hospital?

Most laparoscopic surgery can be performed as a day case or with one post operative night in hospital. More major key-hole surgery such as a bowel resection may need 2 or perhaps 3 nights in hospital. The patient's age, social circumstance and general medical health may all have a bearing on patient's discharge from hospital.

When I get home will there be a long recuperation period?

Not at all. Patients usually return to normal activity much quicker than they would from open surgery.

Will I have to change my diet?

Even for the more major operations, with modern enhanced recovery programmes, patients return to a normal diet very quickly. Small incisions, pain killers not associated with nausea and early return to activity all help patients to return quickly back to normal.

How long before I can get back to work?

It depends on the operation performed but usually one to two weeks off work is all that is required. Some forms of demanding physical work may need longer and the consultant will advise in each case.