# Laparoscopy, Diagnostic

Laparoscopy is a surgical procedure. It is used to diagnose and treat diseases inside the belly (*abdomen*). It is usually a brief, common, and relatively simple procedure. The laparoscope is a thin, lighted, pencil-sized instrument. It is like a telescope. It is inserted into your abdomen through a small cut (*incision*). Your caregiver can look at the organs inside your body through this instrument. He or she can see if there is anything abnormal.

## LAPAROSCOPY OVERVIEW

Laparoscopy can be done either in a hospital or outpatient clinic. You may be given a mild sedative to help you relax before the procedure. Once in the operating room, you will be given a drug to make you sleep (*general anesthesia*). Laparoscopy usually lasts less than 1 hour. After the procedure, you will be monitored in a recovery area until you are stable and doing well. Once you are home, it will take 2 to 3 days to fully recover.

## RISKS AND COMPLICATIONS

Laparoscopy has relatively few risks. Your caregiver will discuss the risks with you before the procedure. Some problems that can occur include:

- Infection.
- Bleeding.
- Damage to other organs.
- Anesthetic side effects.

## THE PROCEDURE

Once you receive anesthesia, your surgeon inflates the abdomen with a harmless gas (*carbon dioxide*). This makes the organs easier to see. The laparoscope is inserted into the abdomen through a small incision. This allows your surgeon to see into the abdomen. Other small instruments are also inserted into the abdomen through other small openings. Many surgeons attach a video camera to the laparoscope to enlarge the view.

During a diagnostic laparoscopy, the surgeon may be looking for inflammation, infection, or cancer. Your surgeon may take tissue samples (*biopsies*). The samples are sent to a specialist in looking at cells and tissue samples (*pathologist*). The pathologist examines them under a microscope. Biopsies can help to diagnose or confirm a disease.

## AFTER THE PROCEDURE

- The gas is released from inside the abdomen.
- The incisions are closed with stitches (*sutures*). Because these incisions are small (usually less than 1/2 inch), there is usually minimal discomfort after the procedure. There may be some mild discomfort in the throat. This is from the tube placed in the throat while you were sleeping. You may have some mild abdominal discomfort. There may also be discomfort from the instrument placement incisions in the abdomen.
- The recovery time is shortened as long as there are no complications.
- You will rest in a recovery room until stable and doing well. As long as there are no complications, you may be allowed to go home.

## HOME CARE INSTRUCTIONS

- Take all medicines as directed.
- Only take over-the-counter or prescription medicines for pain, discomfort, or fever as directed by your caregiver.
- Resume daily activities as directed.
- Showers are preferred over baths.
- You may resume sexual activities in 1 week or as directed.

- **Do not** drive while taking narcotics.

**FINDING OUT THE RESULTS OF YOUR TEST**

Not all test results are available during your visit. If your test results are not back during the visit, make an appointment with your caregiver to find out the results. Do not assume everything is normal if you have not heard from your caregiver or the medical facility. It is important for you to follow up on all of your test results.

SEEK MEDICAL CARE IF:

- There is increasing abdominal pain.
- There is new pain in the shoulders (shoulder strap areas).
- You feel lightheaded or faint.
- You have the chills.
- You or your child has an oral temperature above 102° F (38.9° C).
- There is pus-like (*purulent*) drainage from any of the wounds.
- You are unable to pass gas or have a bowel movement.
- You feel sick to your stomach (*nauseous*) or throw up (*vomit*).

**MAKE SURE YOU:**

- Understand these instructions.
- Will watch your condition.
- Will get help right away if you are not doing well or get worse.

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