

Patient information sheet on laparoscopic nephrectomy

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Introduction

The traditional way of removing a kidney involves a 9 inch cut below the ribcage on the side, which usually results in a stay in hospital for 7-10 days and prevents a return to full activities for 6-12 weeks.

Laparoscopic nephrectomy

Hundreds of cases of laparoscopic (keyhole) nephrectomy have been performed around the world since 1991. The medical literature suggests that it is just as effective as open surgery but avoids the painful incision.

The operation is performed through 4 quarter to half inch cuts side near the rib cage. If it is difficult to perform the operation well using this approach it will complete it using a conventional traditional incision. The likelihood of this is approximately 2%.

After the operation

You should expect some discomfort but this should be easily controlled using the pain-killers you will be prescribed. Most patients leave hospital between 2-4 days after the operation. Be sensible when you are at home - you will have had a major operation so you should not undertake strenuous physical exercise, even if you feel like it, until at least 3 weeks. You may drive as soon as you think you could brake hard and swerve quickly to avoid an accident (typically 2 weeks).

Follow-up

Your follow-up will depend on the precise reason for your nephrectomy and will be discussed with you before discharge.

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