

Frequently Asked Questions

- What exactly is laparoscopy?
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- How long will I stay in the hospital and how soon will I recover from surgery?
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Q: What exactly is Laparoscopy?

A: It's a surgical technique in which the abdominal cavity (belly) is inflated with carbon dioxide gas (CO₂) and distended. A small (3-11mm thick) telescope (resembling a long and thin tube) is then inserted through the belly button, inside the abdominal cavity.

This telescope called laparoscope has a light source at its end and a camera that allows the surgical team to watch on TV monitors, what is inside the belly under magnification and in great detail. The gas already inflated inside helps keep the walls of the abdomen and the organs separated from each other and allows excellent exposure. Additional (one to 3) 5-10mm incisions are made close to the pubic bone to insert long and thin instruments. These instruments are essentially extensions of the surgeon's hands allowing the surgeon to use these instruments from outside the body and perform surgery inside the abdominal cavity.

Q: Where are the incisions made and how big are they?

A: The incision for the insertion of the laparoscope is usually done at the belly button. It is 3-12mm in size (quarter to half inch). Similarly 1 to 3 more incisions may be made lower, close to the pubic bone in order to insert the operating instruments. These incisions are also very small (quarter to half inch).

Q: What are the advantages of laparoscopy?

A: Excellent visualization (exposure) of organs, minimal trauma to organs, Small incisions with less chances of wound infection or/and breakdown. Significantly less adhesion formation (scar tissue inside the abdomen that may cause pain, infertility or bowel obstruction). In addition shorter hospital stay and significantly faster recovery. This means faster mobilization of the patient, that hopefully minimizes postoperative complications.

Q: How long will I stay in the hospital and how soon will I recover from surgery?

A: In general most of our patients are ready to go home the same day. In cases of more extensive procedures an overnight stay is reasonable for observation but still the majority of those patients will go home the next day. Recovery is fast and most patients are able to resume their regular activities (including work) within 3-10 days, depending on the type of surgery. That is much faster than the usual 4-6 weeks of recovery after open abdominal surgery.

Q: Are there any risks, disadvantages or contraindications in laparoscopy?

A: As with any medical/ surgical intervention or procedure there could be some risk associated with it. These risks are similar to those encountered with conventional open surgery (bleeding, infection trauma to adjacent organs etc...)

Extensive operative laparoscopic procedures are technically more demanding and require additional training and surgical skills from the surgeon. In the hands of experienced and trained surgeons laparoscopy is a very useful technique with minimal risks besides the ones encountered in traditional surgery and significant benefits for the short and long term well being of the patient.

Some absolute contraindications for laparoscopy are circulatory collapse (shock), and severe cardiopulmonary disease.

Q: Is it possible to have my uterus, big fibroids or cysts removed through these tiny incisions?
How is that possible?

A: Yes, even a very large uterus or fibroids the size of a large softball have been removed laparoscopically. The tissue to be removed is cut into pieces with specially designed- for this purpose-instruments. Then the pieces are removed through one of the incisions.

Q: Which Health insurances does your office accept?

A: **Our office in Palo Alto will accept all insurances.** Except the following plans: HMOs, CHAMPUS, Medi-Care or Medi-Cal.

For further information regarding your insurance, please contact our office at 650.327.8778