

Laparoscopic (Keyhole) Surgery

Laparoscopic or keyhole surgery involves carrying out an operation using cameras and instruments introduced through small incisions or ports in the abdomen. A gas, carbon dioxide, is introduced to provide a space within the abdomen for the surgeon to carry out the operation. The bowel and other organs can be examined. The affected piece of bowel can be removed. A slightly larger opening is needed to remove the section of bowel from the body.

Conventional surgery on the bowel usually involves an incision (cut) in the abdominal wall and the surgeon will carry out all the surgery through this incision.

Some of the advantages of laparoscopic over conventional surgery are:

- smaller incisions
- less post-operative pain
- shorter hospital stay
- faster return to work or other daily activities

Occasionally the surgeon may find that it is not possible to safely complete an operation purely using the keyhole technique in which case they will need to make an incision or cut and carry out the procedure as for a conventional operation. This is known as conversion and may occur in 10-15% of cases.

Laparoscopic (keyhole) surgery is suitable for many patients with colorectal cancer or other bowel conditions.

The National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence (NICE) has recently recommended laparoscopic and laparoscopic assisted surgery as an alternative to open surgery for people with colorectal cancer if both laparoscopic and open surgery are suitable for the person and their condition their surgeon has been trained in laparoscopic surgery for colorectal cancer and performs the operation often enough to maintain their skills.

Further information on these recommendations can be found on the NICE website www.nice.org.uk

The Birmingham Bowel Clinic surgeons are fully trained laparoscopic surgeons and regularly perform laparoscopic surgery for cancers and non cancerous diseases.