

# Spleen and Liver Injuries

What you need to know after you leave the hospital

## Adult Trauma Program

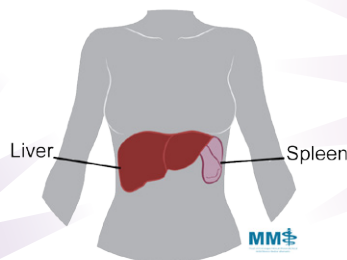
McGill University Health Centre  
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### WHAT DO I NEED TO KNOW ABOUT MY SPLEEN?



Your spleen is a **solid organ** in your body that helps to fight infection and sickness. It has many blood vessels in it. After a blunt injury (caused by a physical force) to the abdomen (belly), the spleen can easily start bleeding.

### WHAT DO I NEED TO KNOW ABOUT MY LIVER?

Your liver is the largest **solid organ** in the body. It works to:

- ▶ Clean your blood
- ▶ Make bile, a liquid which breaks down what you eat
- ▶ Store energy for your body to use

The liver has many blood vessels in it. After a blunt injury to your belly, the liver can easily start to bleed.

### DO I NEED SURGERY?

You have had a blunt injury to your solid organ (Spleen / Liver) that caused bleeding. Not all blunt injuries require surgery.

- ▶ You **will** need surgery if your liver or spleen injury has caused bleeding.
- ▶ You **will not** need surgery if your liver or spleen injury has stopped bleeding.

### WHAT DO I NEED TO DO AFTER THE INJURY?

There are a number of things you can do to keep yourself healthy. These would include:

1. Watching for signs of bleeding
2. Being careful with your activities

#### 1. Watching for signs of bleeding

After you leave the hospital, your spleen/liver may start to bleed again. Watch carefully for the following signs that could mean your spleen / liver are bleeding:

- ▶ Severe abdominal pain
- ▶ Dizziness (lightheaded)
- ▶ Racing heart (palpitations)
- ▶ Passing out (loss of consciousness)
- ▶ Profuse sweating
- ▶ Pale and clammy
- ▶ Hiccups
- ▶ Fever

If you experience any of these symptoms, you should seek immediate medical care by calling your family doctor or going to the local emergency room.

#### 2. Being careful with your activities.

Speak with your doctor before returning to these activities. Ask your health care provider if you have any questions or concerns about your condition, treatment, or care.

#### What activities should I avoid?

Heavy lifting	Blows to the abdomen	Gym classes or contact sports
		
Strenuous activity	Recreational riding or driving such as motorcycles, snowmobiles, or ATVs	
		

#### What activities are safe for me to do?

- ▶ You may have sexual intercourse.
- ▶ You may drive and return to work / school.

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#### IMPORTANT: PLEASE READ

Information provided in this pamphlet is for educational purposes. It is not intended to replace the advice or instruction of a professional healthcare practitioner, or to substitute medical care. Contact a qualified healthcare practitioner if you have any questions concerning your care.

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