

Splenectomy:

When is splenectomy (removal of spleen) done?

There are numerous reasons for which the removal of spleen may be warranted. The most common reasons being idiopathic (unknown cause) thrombocytopenia (low platelets) purpura (ITP). Hemolytic anemia (a condition that breaks down red blood cells) requires a spleen removal to prevent or decrease the need for transfusion. Also, hereditary (genetic) conditions that affect the shape of red blood cells, conditions known as spherocytosis, sickle cell disease or thalassemia, may require splenectomy. Often patients with lymphoma or certain types of leukemia, require spleen removal. When the spleen gets enlarged, it sometimes removes too many platelets from your blood and has to be removed. Sometimes the spleen is removed to diagnose or treat a tumor.

In most cases, it may be possible to do this operation laparoscopically (key hole surgery). However, in some patients, particularly when the spleen is excessively large, it is advisable to remove the spleen by open surgery instead of the laparoscopic procedure.

What are the advantages of removing the spleen laparoscopically?

- Less postoperative pain
- Shorter hospital stay
- Faster return to a regular, solid food diet
- Quicker return to normal activities
- Better cosmetic results

