

# What's fair?

Fair healthcare pricing from Healthcare Blue Book

Healthcare Blue Book is a free consumer guide to help you determine fair prices in your area for healthcare services

## Laparoscopic Cholecystectomy

Alternate name: Laparoscopic surgery to remove the gallbladder (CPT code 47562)

### Fair price:

Includes: Physician fee, facility fee, anesthesia fee

**National fair price:** ..... **\$6,459**

**National range:** ..... **\$5,000 – 12,480**

### Local fair prices:

Boston, Massachusetts 02102 ..... **\$7,665**

Milwaukee, Wisconsin 53202 ..... **\$6,340**

Minneapolis, Minnesota 55402 ..... **\$6,357**

Jacksonville, Florida 32202 ..... **\$6,428**

Los Angeles, California 90006 ..... **\$6,622**

Houston, Texas 77010 ..... **\$6,521**

New York, NY 10003 ..... **\$6,859**

Check the fair price in your region at [healthcarebluebook.com](http://healthcarebluebook.com)

### Details:

#### How were these prices calculated and what are they based on?

This is Healthcare Blue Book's recommended price for a laparoscopic cholecystectomy.

The fair price recommendation is based on the typical negotiated payment amount that providers accept from insurance companies.

If you have insurance, you should be able to find in-network providers that accept prices at or below the Blue Book fair price, although many providers may charge more.

#### How should consumers use this information?

You can use the Blue Book fair price as a guide to help you compare prices when you shop for care and to make sure that you receive treatment at a fair price.

If you have health insurance, you should use your provider directory to identify in-network providers in your area. Laparoscopic cholecystectomy is typically performed by a general surgeon.

You can call the providers or your health insurance company to get a cost estimate. You will need to know the name of the procedure and possibly the Current Procedural Terminology (CPT) code for the service you need. It is also useful to have your insurance card available.

Different in-network providers often charge different prices. Prices for laparoscopic cholecystectomy may range from \$5,000 to over \$10,000 in many areas. We recommend that you call several providers to find one that charges a fair price.

If you do not have insurance, make sure to let the office know that you are a self-paying patient. Self-pay patients are frequently quoted the billed charges amount (like the sticker price for a new car) for the service, which can be 2 to 3 times what the provider would accept from an insurance company. Many providers will offer a discount to self pay patients – but you must remember to ask for the discount.

#### Key points to consider when shopping for laparoscopic cholecystectomy.

- Laparoscopic cholecystectomy pricing frequently varies by over 200% in many locations. It is not uncommon to find laparoscopic cholecystectomy pricing below \$5,000 or above \$10,000. You should call several providers to ask about the price of your laparoscopic cholecystectomy before you have your procedure.
- Make sure that the price estimate includes the physician fee, the facility fee and the anesthesia fee. You may need to call your physician, the facility and the anesthesia practice to get prices.

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- If your Primary Care Physician has already referred you to a specialist, make sure to ask for their price and compare it to the Blue Book fair price before receiving treatment.
- If you get a price estimate that is significantly higher than the fair price, you may want to talk to your doctor about other facilities where you could have your procedure performed. Some doctors can perform the procedure at a free standing Ambulatory Surgery Center (ASC). Receiving treatment at an independent ASC is typically less expensive than having the procedure at a hospital's outpatient facility.

If you have a Health Savings Account (HSA) or Health Reimbursement Account (HRA) you can apply those funds to any deductible, co-insurance or other out of pocket costs.

### **Is a laparoscopic cholecystectomy typically covered by health insurance plans?**

Yes, laparoscopic cholecystectomy is usually covered by health insurance. Always check with your insurer to make sure a procedure is covered before seeking treatment.

Your insurer may require pre-certification prior to agreeing to cover your laparoscopic cholecystectomy. You should always ask and then confirm that your provider is going to obtain pre-certification for your laparoscopic cholecystectomy before you receive treatment.

If your provider does not obtain pre-certification prior to your laparoscopic cholecystectomy, you will need to call the health plan and request pre-certification yourself. Insurers may deny payment of the claim if you have not obtained pre-certification.

### **Is a laparoscopic cholecystectomy typically covered by Medicare or Medicaid plans?**

Yes, laparoscopic cholecystectomy is covered under Medicare and Medicaid. Your provider may need to establish medical necessity or pre-certification before you receive treatment.

### **What kind of out-of-pocket costs should I expect to pay?**

Your out of pocket costs will depend on the type of insurance that you have. You may be responsible for copays, deductibles or coinsurance amounts. In order to determine your out of pocket costs, always review your co-pay amounts, current deductible balance and current co-insurance obligation before seeking treatment. If you have questions about your benefit plan or out of pocket costs, talk to your insurance company.

Remember, if you have a Health Savings Account (HSA) or Health Reimbursement Account (HRA) you can apply those funds to any deductible, co-insurance or other out of pocket costs.

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### **Do the costs for this service vary depending on which provider I use?**

The price variation in most locations varies by 200% or more depending on where you get your care. Make sure to ask about the price of this service before you get your care to make sure that you will be charged a fair price. If you are not satisfied with a provider's price, you can consider other providers that may offer you a more reasonable price.

### **What other trends or variations in cost should I be aware of?**

- Surgery will generally be recommended if you have symptoms from gallbladder stones, gallbladder inflammation, or gallbladder cancer. However, if you have gallbladder stones that are not causing any symptoms and you are over age 65, your doctor may not recommend that you have surgery to remove the gallbladder.
- Most often, the best single test for diagnosing gallstones is transabdominal ultrasonography. Fortunately, the ultrasound test is also usually the least expensive imaging test. Other common tests include magnetic resonance cholangio-pancreatography (MRCP), cholescintigraphy (HIDA scan), and endoscopic retrograde cholangio-pancreatography (ERCP).
- There are two ways to perform gallbladder surgery: laparoscopic or open. Laparoscopic gallbladder removal is a better choice for both quality and cost. Laparoscopic gallbladder removal does not require the abdominal muscles to be cut; there is less pain, quicker healing, smaller incisions, and fewer complications. Many patients can go home the day of the surgery and most patients can return to work in about a week.
- If you have previously had surgery in the area of your gallbladder, if you have a bleeding problem, or if you have any problem that would make it hard for your doctor to see your gallbladder, an open surgery may be better for you. Your doctor will decide which type of surgery is best for you.

### **What other tips can help me ensure I get the best price?**

The choice of facility for your laparoscopic cholecystectomy will usually have the biggest impact on your total price. When seeking a surgeon, patients will want to make sure to ask if the surgeon can perform the procedure at an independent ambulatory surgery center (ASC). Independent ASCs are not affiliated with major hospitals, and generally charge less than hospital based outpatient facilities for equivalent or better quality care.

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## Qualifications

Hospitals should be accredited by The Joint Commission on Accreditation for Healthcare Organizations (JCAHO).

ASCs should be accredited by one of the major agencies, including the Accreditation Association for Ambulatory Health Care (AAAHC), American Association for Accreditation of Ambulatory Surgery Facilities (AAAASF) or the Joint Commission on Accreditation for Healthcare Organizations (JCAHO).

General surgeons should be board certified by the American Board of Surgery.

## Alternatives

Laparoscopic cholecystectomy is preferred to an open cholecystectomy, the alternative surgical approach, assuming a patient is a surgical candidate for both procedures.

The pricing and benefits information reflected in this report is based upon the common pricing and practices found in most markets and may not reflect the specific pricing or health benefits available to you. Some providers charge amounts well in excess of the Blue Book fair price. Some insurance plans cover services differently. If possible, you should check with your medical provider and health insurance company to confirm pricing and benefit coverage for services before you get care. In addition, you will want to check on your providers' quality information.

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