

Fast Facts

Gallbladder

- A small pouch that sits just under the liver and stores bile that is produced by the liver.
- Size of a small pear when full of bile before meals and looks like a deflated balloon empty.
- Empties the bile into the beginning of the small intestines via small tubes (ducts) after receiving signal from stomach that food is present.
- Bile is essential to digesting fats, but the gallbladder is not vital (if removed, the bile would drip slowly from the liver via the ducts into the small intestines as it is produced rather than being stored).

<i>Complications</i>	<i>Definition</i>	<i>Treatment</i>	<i>Prevention</i>
<i>Gallstones</i>	Caused by substances in the bile that crystallize and can be as small as a grain of sand to the size of a golf ball. They are common and harmless unless they block a duct	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -No symptoms -Block duct = sudden and rapidly intensifying pain in the upper right portion or center of abdomen -Pain in back between shoulder blades -Pain in right shoulder -Nausea/vomiting -See doctor if pain becomes so intense that you cannot sit or find a comfortable position, your skin/whites of your eyes becomes yellow (jaundice) or you have a high fever with chills 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -If overweight, lose weight in a slow, steady and safe manner. -If you are not overweight, it is important to maintain your weight. -Eat a healthy diet that is low in fat. -Do not skip meals -Eat several smaller meals throughout the day
<i>Cholecystitis</i>	An infection of the gallbladder that is typically caused by gallstones being present and blocking a duct causing inflammation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Severe pain in the right upper abdomen with radiation to your right shoulder or back -Tenderness when abdomen is touched -Nausea/vomiting -Fever 	
<i>Gallstone Pancreatitis</i>	When a gallstone blocks the duct that drains the pancreas causing inflammation to it. This is a serious medical condition and needs to be treated immediately because the pancreas is what helps regulate our blood glucose (sugar) levels and is vital to our survival.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Same symptoms as gallstones -Pain may also be in left upper abdomen or back -Sharp/squeezing pain that comes on suddenly and is severe -Nausea/vomiting 	

<i>Gallbladder Cancer</i>	Rare and difficult to diagnose because the symptoms often resemble that of gallstones. Often it isn't found until it is in late stages.	Prevent gallstones from causing recurrent cholecystitis	
<i>Porcelain Gallbladder</i>	When the gallbladder itself becomes calcified and unable to function. It is unclear the exact cause but thought to be related to gallstones causing chronic cholecystitis. It puts you at an increased risk for cancer.	Prevent gallstones from causing recurrent cholecystitis	
<i>Gallbladder Polyps</i>	Growths that protrude from the lining of the interior of the gallbladder. Typically, if they are smaller (less than a half inch), the polyps are benign (non-cancerous), which accounts for the majority of them.	Prevent gallstones from causing recurrent cholecystitis	
<i>Biliary Colic</i>	Term for intermittent pain in the right upper abdomen from contraction of the gallbladder as it tries to get rid of a gallstone or sludge that is blocking one of the ducts		

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