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Gallstones

Also called: Cholelithiasis

Your gallbladder is a pear-shaped organ under your liver. It stores bile, a fluid made by your liver to digest fat. As your stomach and intestines digest food, your gallbladder releases bile through a tube called the common bile duct. The duct connects your gallbladder and liver to your small intestine.


Your gallbladder is most likely to give you trouble if something blocks the flow of bile through the **bile ducts** [<https://medlineplus.gov/bileductdiseases.html>] . That is usually a gallstone. Gallstones form when substances in bile harden. Gallstone attacks usually happen after you eat. Signs of a gallstone attack may include nausea, vomiting, or pain in the abdomen, back, or just under the right arm.

Gallstones are most common among older adults, women, overweight people, Native Americans and Mexican Americans.


Gallstones are often found during imaging tests for other health conditions. If you do not have symptoms, you usually do not need treatment. The most common treatment is removal of the gallbladder. Fortunately, you can live without a gallbladder. Bile has other ways to reach your small intestine.

NIH: National Institute of Diabetes and Digestive and Kidney Diseases

Start Here

- Gallstones [<https://www.mayoclinic.org/diseases-conditions/gallstones/symptoms-causes/syc-20354214?p=1>] (Mayo Foundation for Medical Education and Research)
- Gallstones [<https://www.niddk.nih.gov/health-information/digestive-diseases/gallstones>]  (National Institute of Diabetes and Digestive and Kidney Diseases)
Also in Spanish [<https://www.niddk.nih.gov/health-information/informacion-de-la-salud/enfermedades-digestivas/calculos-bilares>]

Diagnosis and Tests

- Abdominal exploration - series [https://medlineplus.gov/ency/presentations/100049_1.htm] (Medical Encyclopedia)
Also in Spanish [https://medlineplus.gov/spanish/ency/esp_presentations/100049_1.htm]
- Abdominal Ultrasound [<https://www.radiologyinfo.org/en/info/abdominus>]  (American College of Radiology; Radiological Society of North America)
Also in Spanish [<https://www.radiologyinfo.org/es/info/abdominus>]
- HIDA Scan [<https://www.mayoclinic.org/tests-procedures/hida-scan/about/pac-20384701?p=1>] (Mayo Foundation for Medical Education and Research)
Also in Spanish [<https://www.mayoclinic.org/es/tests-procedures/hida-scan/about/pac-20384701?p=1>]

Treatments and Therapies

- Endoscopic retrograde cholangio pancreatography (ERCP) - series [https://medlineplus.gov/ency/presentations/100180_1.htm] (Medical Encyclopedia)
Also in Spanish [https://medlineplus.gov/spanish/ency/esp_presentations/100180_1.htm]

Endoscopic Retrograde Cholangiopancreatography (ERCP) [<https://www.niddk.nih.gov/health-information/diagnostic-tests/endoscopic-retrograde-cholangiopancreatography>]  (National Institute of Diabetes and Digestive and Kidney Diseases)

Also in Spanish [<https://www.niddk.nih.gov/health-information/informacion-de-la-salud/pruebas-diagnosticas/colangiopancreatografia-retrograda-endoscopica>]

Gallbladder Cleanse: A "Natural" Remedy for Gallstones? [<https://www.mayoclinic.org/diseases-conditions/gallstones/expert-answers/gallbladder-cleanse/FAQ-20058134?p=1>]

(Mayo Foundation for Medical Education and Research)

Also in Spanish [<https://www.mayoclinic.org/es/diseases-conditions/gallstones/expert-answers/gallbladder-cleanse/faq-20058134?p=1>]

Related Issues

Cholecystitis [<https://www.mayoclinic.org/diseases-conditions/cholecystitis/symptoms-causes/syc-20364867?p=1>]

(Mayo Foundation for Medical Education and Research)

Also in Spanish [<https://www.mayoclinic.org/es/diseases-conditions/cholecystitis/symptoms-causes/syc-20364867?p=1>]

Specifics

Biliary Tract Disorders, Gallbladder Disorders, and Gallstone Pancreatitis [<https://gi.org/topics/biliary-tract-disorders-gallbladder-disorders-and-gallstone-pancreatitis/>] (American College of Gastroenterology)


Also in Spanish [<https://gi.org/patients/recursos-en-espanol/trastornos-del-tracto-biliar-trastornos-de-la-vesicula-biliar-y-pancreatitis-por-calculos-biliares/>]

Chronic Diarrhea: A Concern after Gallbladder Removal? [<https://www.mayoclinic.org/tests-procedures/cholecystectomy/expert-answers/gallbladder-removal/FAQ-20058481?p=1>]

(Mayo Foundation for Medical Education and Research)

Also in Spanish [<https://www.mayoclinic.org/es/tests-procedures/cholecystectomy/expert-answers/gallbladder-removal/faq-20058481?p=1>]


Dieting and Gallstones [<https://www.niddk.nih.gov/health-information/digestive-diseases/gallstones/dieting>]

 (National Institute of Diabetes and Digestive and Kidney Diseases)


Also in Spanish [<https://www.niddk.nih.gov/health-information/informacion-de-la-salud/enfermedades-digestivas/calculos-biliares/dieta>]

Clinical Trials

ClinicalTrials.gov: Choledocholithiasis [<https://clinicaltrials.gov/search?cond=%22Choledocholithiasis%22&aggFilters=status:not%20rec>]

 (National Institutes of Health)

ClinicalTrials.gov: Cholelithiasis [<https://clinicaltrials.gov/search?cond=%22Cholelithiasis%22&aggFilters=status:not%20rec>]

 (National Institutes of Health)

Journal Articles

References and abstracts from MEDLINE/PubMed (National Library of Medicine)

Article: Integrating critical view of safety and indocyanine green cholangiography to enhance...

[<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/40594014>]

Article: The roles of lifestyle factors and genetic risk in the association... [<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/40502398>]

Article: Solo surgeon ambulatory magnetic-assisted robotic surgery (MARS): initial 51 cases with...

[<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/40500543>]

Gallstones -- see more articles [<https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/?term=%22Cholelithiasis%22%5Bmajr%3Anoexp%5D+AND+humans%5Bmh%5D+AND+english%5Bla%5D+AND+%22last+1+Year%22+%5Bedat%5D+NOT+%28letter%5Bpt%5D+OR+case+reports%5Bpt%5D+OR+editorial%5Bpt%5D+OR+comment%5Bpt%5D%29+AND+free+full+text%5Bsb%5D+>]

term=%22Cholelithiasis%22%5Bmajr%3Anoexp%5D+AND+humans%5Bmh%5D+AND+english%5Bla%5D+AND+%22last+1+Year%22+%5Bedat%5D+NOT+%28letter%5Bpt%5D+OR+case+reports%5Bpt%5D+OR+editorial%5Bpt%5D+OR+comment%5Bpt%5D%29+AND+free+full+text%5Bsb%5D+

Find an Expert

National Institute of Diabetes and Digestive and Kidney Diseases [<https://www.niddk.nih.gov>] 

Women

Gallstones in Women [<https://gi.org/topics/gallstones-in-women/>] (American College of Gastroenterology)

Patient Handouts

- **Cholelithiasis** [<https://medlineplus.gov/ency/article/000274.htm>] (Medical Encyclopedia)
Also in Spanish [<https://medlineplus.gov/spanish/ency/article/000274.htm>]
- **ERCP** [<https://medlineplus.gov/ency/article/007479.htm>] (Medical Encyclopedia)
Also in Spanish [<https://medlineplus.gov/spanish/ency/article/007479.htm>]
- **Gallbladder removal - laparoscopic - discharge** [<https://medlineplus.gov/ency/patientinstructions/000117.htm>]
(Medical Encyclopedia)
Also in Spanish [<https://medlineplus.gov/spanish/ency/patientinstructions/000117.htm>]
- **Gallstones** [<https://medlineplus.gov/ency/article/000273.htm>] (Medical Encyclopedia)
Also in Spanish [<https://medlineplus.gov/spanish/ency/article/000273.htm>]
- **Laparoscopic gallbladder removal** [<https://medlineplus.gov/ency/article/007371.htm>] (Medical Encyclopedia)
Also in Spanish [<https://medlineplus.gov/spanish/ency/article/007371.htm>]
- **Open gallbladder removal** [<https://medlineplus.gov/ency/article/002930.htm>] (Medical Encyclopedia)
Also in Spanish [<https://medlineplus.gov/spanish/ency/article/002930.htm>]



MEDICAL ENCYCLOPEDIA

- Abdominal exploration [<https://medlineplus.gov/ency/article/002928.htm>]
- Abdominal exploration - series [https://medlineplus.gov/ency/presentations/100049_1.htm]
- Abdominal MRI scan [<https://medlineplus.gov/ency/article/003796.htm>]
- Abdominal ultrasound [<https://medlineplus.gov/ency/article/003777.htm>]
- Cholelithiasis [<https://medlineplus.gov/ency/article/000274.htm>]
- Endoscopic retrograde cholangio pancreatography (ERCP) - series [https://medlineplus.gov/ency/presentations/100180_1.htm]
- ERCP [<https://medlineplus.gov/ency/article/007479.htm>]
- Fecal fat [<https://medlineplus.gov/ency/article/003588.htm>]
- Gallbladder removal - laparoscopic - discharge [<https://medlineplus.gov/ency/patientinstructions/000117.htm>]
- Gallbladder removal - open - discharge [<https://medlineplus.gov/ency/patientinstructions/000118.htm>]
- Gallbladder removal - Series [https://medlineplus.gov/ency/presentations/100021_1.htm]
- Gallstones [<https://medlineplus.gov/ency/article/000273.htm>]
- Gallstones - discharge [<https://medlineplus.gov/ency/patientinstructions/000196.htm>]
- Laparoscopic gallbladder removal [<https://medlineplus.gov/ency/article/007371.htm>]

Open gallbladder removal [<https://medlineplus.gov/ency/article/002930.htm>]

Related Health Topics

Gallbladder Diseases [<https://medlineplus.gov/gallbladderdiseases.html>]

National Institutes of Health

The primary NIH organization for research on *Gallstones* is the National Institute of Diabetes and Digestive and Kidney Diseases [<https://www.niddk.nih.gov>]

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