

2014

Gallstones

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The gallbladder is a pear-shaped sac, tucked under the liver in the upper right part of the abdomen. It stores bile made by the liver. Bile helps you digest fat. Gallstones start as small particles and can grow larger over time. They cause problems when they block the ducts (tubes) that the bile needs to travel through.

Today your examination and test results suggest that your pain may be caused by gallstones. This pamphlet is designed to answer questions about your care at home now that your pain is resolved.

Gallbladder surgery is sometimes needed when you have repeated attacks of pain.

Instructions

1. Rest until you feel better.
2. Start off at home with clear fluids such as water, tea, broth, Gatorade®, and Jell-O®.
3. If you are tolerating fluids, eat small amounts of bland foods such as rice, cooked cereals, clear soup, bread, crackers, baked potatoes, bananas, or apple sauce. Do not eat fried or spicy foods, or foods that are high in fat.
4. You may begin normal foods 2-3 days after your pain is gone by eating small amounts frequently.
5. Take medications prescribed by your doctor for pain as needed.

Diet tips

Many people with gallstones have reported certain foods to be triggers for their gallbladder pain.

Some examples of common triggers are:

- › Eggs
 - › Pork
 - › Fried, fatty, or spicy foods
 - › Cream, butter, cheese
- Avoid foods that are high in fat such as fried foods, store-bought baked goods, potato chips, rich desserts, and processed or fatty cuts of meat.
 - Check food labels to see how much fat is in one serving. Choose foods that have the lowest % Daily Value for total fat. Look for a % Daily Value of less than 5% fat.
 - Choose lower fat or fat-free salad dressings.
 - Buy milk products that are lower in fat such as skim or 1% milk, yogurt with less than 1% milk fat (M.F.) or skim milk cheese (10% M.F. or less).
 - Eat chicken and fish more often. Take the skin off chicken.
 - Broil, bake, barbecue, steam, poach, or microwave food instead of frying.
 - Limit the amount of added fat to foods. Use less oil when cooking. Decrease the amount of butter, salad dressing, margarine, and mayonnaise you use.
 - Eat smaller portions of meat, poultry, and fish. A serving is the size of a deck of cards. Trim all the fat you can see before cooking.

Call your family doctor or return to the Emergency Department if you have:

- Increased pain.
- Persistent (continuous) vomiting.
- A temperature over 38.5°C (101.3°F).
- A swollen belly and/or it is firm to touch.
- Any other symptom that is out of the ordinary that you are worried about.

If you have any questions, please ask.
We are here to help you.

Looking for more health information?

Contact your local public library for books, videos, magazines, and other resources.
For more information go to <http://library.novascotia.ca>

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