

# gall bladder

The gall bladder is attached to the liver, on the upper right-hand side of the rib-cage.

The gall bladder is a pear-shaped bag, about 7-10 centimetres long. A tube called the **cystic duct** forms at the stem, connecting the gall bladder to the rest of the digestive system.

The gallbladder stores bile, which is made by the liver. Bile enters and is released through the cystic duct. Bile drains through the cystic duct into the common bile duct and then into the small intestine when food is present. Bile helps in the digestion of fatty foods. It also helps to get rid of worn out red blood cells. Eating fatty foods will trigger the gall bladder to squeeze its bile concentrate into the small intestine.

Gallstones are the most common reason for gall bladder disease. Some factors that contribute to gall stones developing are crystallisation of excess cholesterol in the bile, and the failure of the gall bladder to completely empty. These stones vary in size, from a few millimetres to a few centimetres and can block the ducts that allow the bile to be squeezed through to the small intestine, in some instances causing pain and serious complications. These complications can include nausea and vomiting, gall bladder infection, liver infection, jaundice and inflammation of the pancreas.

People of all ages can develop gallstones, yet they are rare in younger age groups. The chance of developing gallstones tends to increase with age. Those that are considered to be at an increased risk include the following:

- Obese people
- Those with a high blood cholesterol level

- People with diseases such as chronic intestinal inflammation, Crohns Disease and Ulcerative Colitis
- Women who take drugs containing oestrogen, eg contraceptive pills

A gall bladder that is not functioning to its fullest potential can create many physical symptoms, including bloating, burping, gas, and reflux. The gall bladder can also create a pain in the lower back if it gets really out of control as well as diarrhoea.

On the program

As some clients have had their gall bladder removed we recommend that they eat raw foods, especially salad vegetables with every meal, as this has a cleansing effect and will improve the digestion of the meal.

The gall bladder is important for digestion, yet is not a vital organ and the body can cope without it. Cholecystectomy or a surgical removal of the gall bladder is usually the case if gallstones or another type of gall bladder disease is causing problems.

References: <http://health.ninemsn.com.au/article.aspx?id=28505&print=true>  
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