



What are Gallstones?

Gallstones are solid pieces of material that develop in the gallbladder and look like small stones or pebbles. Gallstones may be as small as grains of sand or as large as a golf ball. The gallbladder can develop **several hundreds of tiny stones** or one large one, or a combination of both.

There are two types of gallstones, **cholesterol stones** and **pigment stones**. Cholesterol stones are yellowish-green in color and consist of hardened cholesterol – they make about 80 percent of gallstones. They are formed when bile contains too much cholesterol. Pigment stones are small and dark, and consist of bilirubin and calcium.

Most people with gallstones are not even aware that they have them because they do not get ill from them. However, if a **gallstone leaves your gallbladder and gets stuck in the passageway** from your gallbladder to your intestine, you will experience severe pain in the right upper part of your abdomen and upper back. Because the gallbladder is an organ that we can live without, if it is removed, bile will flow out of the liver through the hepatic ducts into the common bile duct and directly into the small intestine.

Diagnosing Gallstones

Gallstones are often **diagnosed when testing for other health conditions** such as a heart disease, ulcers, irritable bowel syndrome, appendicitis, pancreatitis, or hepatitis.

If gallstones are suspected, your health practitioner may perform certain tests that include:

- Ultrasound exam
- Computerized tomography (CT) scan
- Cholescintigraphy (HIDA scan)
- **Endoscopic retrograde cholangiopancreatography (ERCP)**
- **Blood tests**

Symptoms

The symptoms of gallstones include:

- Pain under the right shoulder
- Pain in the right upper abdomen that increases quickly and lasts from 30 minutes to several hours

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Never disregard professional medical advice or delay in seeking it because of something you have read in this ebook or on ANY website.

- Pain in the back between the shoulder blades

What Causes Gallstones?

Digestive juices (bile) are stored in the gallbladder, and when juices harden and become solid, they form into pieces of stones called gallstones. Bile consists of water, cholesterol, fats, bile salts, proteins, and a waste product known as bilirubin. If there is **too much cholesterol, bile salts, or bilirubin in bile**, it can harden into gallstones.

[Gallstones](#) are made of cholesterol and bile pigments. Cholesterol stones may form when bile contains too much cholesterol or bilirubin, or not enough bile salts. These stones may even form when the **gallbladder does not empty completely** or often enough. If one of these stones partially or completely blocks the normal flow of bile may cause a biliary [colic](#) attack together with nausea, vomiting and abdominal pain.

Gallbladder attacks typically follow after a fatty meal. When stones **continuously block the drainage of bile**, inflammation or infection of the gallbladder and bile ducts, acute pancreatitis and jaundice may be caused.

Help for Gallstones

Most people who **have [gallstones](#) without any symptoms do not require treatment**. However, if you experience frequent attacks of pain, it may be necessary to have your gallbladder removed. This type of surgery is called a cholecystectomy. Sound wave therapy is another treatment option used for people who may have a risk in surgery – they may suffer from heart problems, lung disease or be elderly. Medication may be used to dissolve [gallstones](#), but this treatment is very expensive.

Natural Remedies

Natural and holistic treatments have been used for thousands of years to promote liver health and functioning. Herbal remedies are gentle to use and **improve the natural ability of the body to detox** and cleanse the system. Herbs such as *Silybum marianus* (Milk Thistle) are an excellent liver tonic with powerful antioxidant properties. *Taraxacum officinale* (Dandelion) improves gall bladder functioning and bile flow. In addition, *Verbena officinalis* (Vervain or Wild Hyssop) is highly recommended as a hepatic (liver) tonic but is also beneficial for overall health.

Tips for the prevention of gallstones

- Eat a low-fat, low cholesterol diet
- Maintain a healthy weight and lose weight if you are overweight
- Monitor your cholesterol levels
- Exercise regularly to help regulate the bile that passes through your system
- Avoid refined sugars and complex carbohydrates
- Increase your intake of fiber
- Diabetics should learn to control their condition so as to prevent gallbladder disease

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Michele Carelse, Clinical Psychologist



All of our natural remedies are formulated by our expert team of herbalists, naturopaths and homeopaths, and headed by Michele Carelse.

Michele has had years of experience in the manufacturing and use of natural remedies. In addition, she is a trained Clinical Psychologist and has been incorporating natural remedies into her treatment of patients with depression, anxiety, ADD, ADHD and stress for many years with spectacular results.

- Consult with your doctor whether you should take estrogen after menopause or high dose birth control pills, as they are believed to cause gallstones

The Natural Approach

While Western medicine has become the norm in many cultures, it is not the only treatment option. Conventional western medicine, often called allopathic medicine, is the system of medicine taught at most medical schools and most pharmaceutical and synthetic medicines are manufactured and marketed according to the principles of allopathic medicine. Allopathic medicine is also sometimes called orthodox medicine.

Because most of us in the Western world have grown up in a society in which allopathic medicine is the prevailing norm, we forget that, only a few decades ago, homeopathic, herbal and other natural medicines were commonly available – and freely used even by conventional doctors. While there are often heated debates about which system of medicine is ‘better’ than the other, many responsible doctors (whether they are allopathic or not) recognize that both have a role to play in the treatment program.

Natural medicine has often been frowned on by conventional doctors, especially by those who did not have sufficient knowledge of these medicines. However, it is encouraging to note that some medical schools are now beginning to re-introduce it into their course work, thereby providing doctors with a wider range of treatment options from which to choose. In many countries, especially in Europe, India and China, natural and homeopathic medicines are commonly prescribed by conventional doctors and represent a significant part of the total annual drug sales.

Naturopathy is a branch of medicine (just as allopathy is a branch of medicine) which operates according to the underlying philosophy that the body has an innate capacity to heal itself. While natural medicines are often called ‘alternative’ or ‘complimentary’ medicines, they are, in fact, a unique and independent form of medicine in their own right, well able to treat a variety of conditions. Perhaps the term ‘holistic’ medicine is more apt, given the broad range of treatment options and approaches which are to be found within the practice of natural medicine, which encompasses many different disciplines, including herbalism, homeopathy, iridology, osteopathy, chiropractic, therapeutic massage techniques, aromatherapy, acupuncture and many, many more.

Most naturopaths will use a variety of treatment modalities in order to treat their patients in a holistic way to support health, relieve symptoms and prevent future disease. In fact, even the World Health Organization defines health as being "... more than simply the absence of illness. It is the active state of physical, emotional, mental and social well-being." This is a wonderfully clear description of holistic or natural medicine, which strives to support health (thereby relieving or preventing symptoms), rather than simply eliminating disease.

Although allopathic medicine certainly has a role to play and has made a tremendous contribution to medical science during the past century, there is a growing perception that it is not the only answer and that, in many cases, holistic medicine can accomplish just as much, if not more – without the risk of side effects, addiction and sacrifice to health so commonly associated with pharmaceutical drugs. Contrary to common perception, and provided that they are manufactured in the correct way, natural medicines can work quickly and safely to

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promote healing.

In many cases, they can succeed where pharmaceutical drugs have failed. Despite frequent reports that they are 'unproven' and 'untested', the opposite is true. Natural medicines have a long history of usage and there is a wealth of empirical evidence to support their effectiveness and safety. In addition, active clinical research is carried out by many academic hospitals and universities to support the extensive traditional and empirical evidence behind natural medicines.

It is also important to know that, like any medicine, herbal and homeopathic medicines must be manufactured in the correct way, following acceptable procedures and manufacturing methods to ensure maximum effectiveness and safety. Due to the recent rise in popularity of natural remedies, many companies have sprung up to take advantage of the market. Unfortunately not all of them are equipped to manufacture to the correct standards, often resulting in a flood of inferior (and sometimes even unsafe) remedies onto the market – and giving natural remedies a bad name.

Even some pharmaceutical companies have rushed to claim their market share by producing so-called 'standardized' extracts of herbs and offering these as superior to the tried and tested methods of naturopathic manufacturing. Nothing could be further from the truth. While 'standardized' extracts may offer benefit of easy consistency of dosage (and cheaper more efficient production lines), they have grave disadvantages. These include an increase in side effects as the medicines produced in this manner lose the natural protective properties of the herbs. In some cases, these side effects have proved fatal – as was seen in the liver toxicity associated with standardized extracts of kava kava, a herb previously safely used for generations without any known side effects.

Most naturopaths recommend what is called the Full Spectrum Method of extraction – which retains the benefits of ALL the active ingredients within the herb as opposed to isolating only one – thereby providing a more complete treatment as well as superior protection against side effects.

Whatever your choice, always choose wisely. Research what is best for you. If you have a chronic or life threatening condition, don't make changes without first discussing them with your doctor in order that your condition may be monitored. Well informed and supportive practitioners will support patients who want to take responsibility for their own health.

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