

Gallbladder surgery



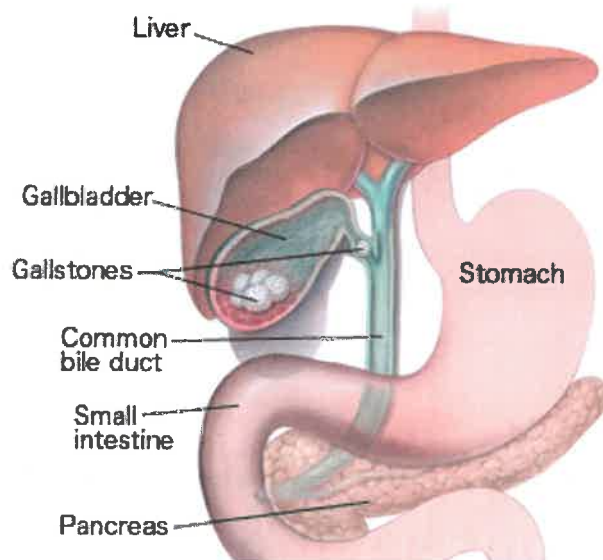
This booklet is designed to give you information about having treatment or surgery on your gallbladder

We hope that it will answer some of your questions

It is not meant to replace the discussion between you and your surgeon.

What is the gallbladder?

The gallbladder is a small pear sized organ located under the liver that stores bile. Bile is necessary for the digestion of fatty food. The bile duct is a tube that carries bile from the liver to the bowel, and attached to this is the gallbladder.



What are gallstones?

Gallstones are small hard masses consisting of hardened digestive fluids. The medical term for gallstone formation is Cholelithiasis. Gallstones can leave the gallbladder and block the flow of bile to the ducts which causes severe pain and swelling of the gallbladder. A gallstone in the common bile duct is called Choledocholithiasis. Gallstones can also cause a severe infection of the gallbladder called Cholecystitis.

What is a Cholecystectomy?

A Cholecystectomy is the surgical removal of the gallbladder. The operation is usually done to remove gallstones causing pain or infection.

How is the operation performed?

The operation involves removing both the gallbladder and stones either using a keyhole approach or a larger cut. Your surgeon will advise you which operation is best for you.

Laparoscopic Cholecystectomy (keyhole)

This surgery uses a laparoscope (an instrument to see inside of your body) to remove the gallbladder. The surgery is performed through several small cuts rather than through one large cut. To provide space for the surgery to be performed your abdomen is filled with a gas called carbon dioxide. Occasionally your surgeon may start to do your operation using a keyhole approach but needs to convert it to an open operation.

Open Cholecystectomy

The gallbladder is removed through one larger cut in your abdomen. The cut is made just below your ribs on the right side and goes to just below your waist.

Many surgeons perform an x-ray during the operation called an intraoperative cholangiogram to identify stones which may be located in the ducts and to identify the anatomy of the bile duct system.

Are there any risks with the surgery?

Generally this surgery is considered very safe and the risks associated with it are very low. However, some of the following problems can occur:

Wound infection – antibiotics may be given to help reduce the risk of this happening.

Bleeding – a small amount of blood loss is expected

following surgery.

If bleeding is prolonged or excessive a blood transfusion may be required.

Chest infection – a chest infection can develop following surgery when you are not taking deep breaths due to pain and drowsiness.

Ileus – sometimes the bowel is slow to start working after surgery. If this happens the bowel may need to be rested for a period of time.

Other risks – some surgeries have specific risks associated with them such as bile duct injury and blood clots. Risks do increase with age and for people who already have heart, chest or other medical conditions such as diabetes or for people who are overweight or smoke. **No mention of injury risks to Liver**

Bile Duct Injury is mention under 'Other' but not specific to the surgery undergoing

No mention BDI risk is high as 1.4% and can impact on the patient's physical and mental quality of life

What happens before surgery?

Before your operation you will be given an appointment to attend the pre-admission clinic. The appointment can take between 3 and 4 hours. During the appointment you will see a team of people who will help you to prepare for your surgery and identify and correct any potential problems. This is also your opportunity to ask questions. It might help you to write down any questions you may have before your appointment.

Here are some of the people you might see and what their role is.

Nurse – they will talk to you about what to expect before and after surgery and tell you:

- where to ring to find out when you need to stop eating and drinking before your surgery
- where to arrive at the hospital
- length of stay in hospital and what happens when you go home

Anaesthetist – they will: