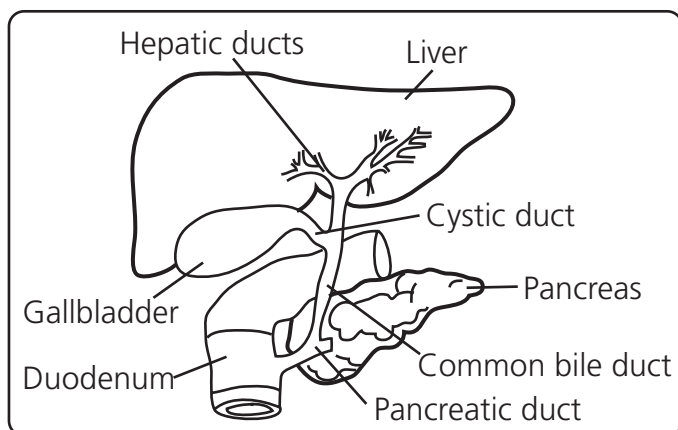


## Dietary Advice for People with Cholecystitis or Gallstones

The following information will give you guidance on what you should be eating when you have been diagnosed with cholecystitis or gallstones, or after treatment, to help reduce your risk of further gallstones forming.

### What is the gallbladder?

The gallbladder is a small pear-shaped pouch in the upper right part of your abdomen below your liver. It stores bile produced by the liver. Bile is a digestive fluid that helps to break down fatty food, and is carried from the gallbladder through the bile duct to the duodenum which is the first part of the small intestine.



### What is cholecystitis?

Cholecystitis means inflammation of the gallbladder. It usually occurs when a gallstone blocks the cystic duct.

### What are gallstones?

Gallstones occur when bile (which is normally fluid) forms stones. Gallstones commonly contain lumps of cholesterol-like (fatty) material that has solidified and hardened. Sometimes bile pigments or calcium deposits can form gallstones. Gallstones may vary in size and number.

### What causes gallstones?

There may be many causes of gallstones including environmental and genetic influences. Changes in the western diet particularly with increasing rates of obesity are also thought to be a contributing factor. Pregnancy can also increase the risk of developing gallstones.

Although no specific dietary recommendations can be made to reduce the risk of gallstones, a healthy diet aimed at reducing your risk of other diseases and achieving a healthy weight may also help reduce your risk of developing gallstones.

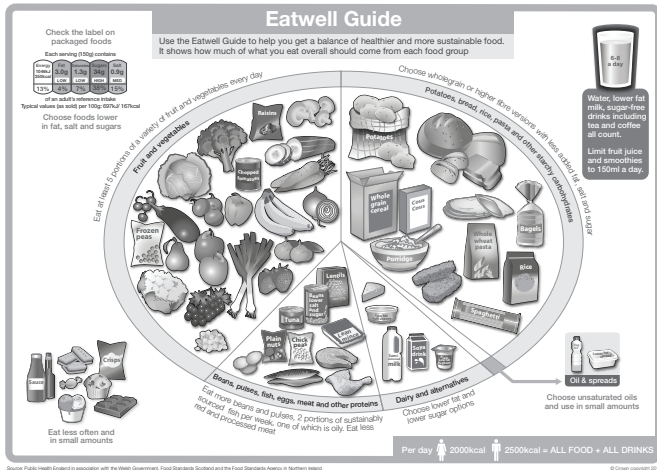
In the past people with gallstones were sometimes advised to adopt a very low fat diet but recent evidence suggests this isn't helpful because rapid weight loss resulting from a very low fat diet can actually cause gallstones to grow. A more gradual weight loss plan (0.5-1kg /1-2lbs per week) by following a healthy diet is recommended.

A healthy diet won't eradicate your gallstones or completely eliminate your symptoms, but it can improve your general health and may help control pain caused by gallstones.

### 8 steps for a healthy diet

- Enjoy your food
- Eat a variety of different foods
- Eat the right amount to be a healthy weight
- Eat plenty of carbohydrate foods rich in starch and fibre
- Eat plenty of fruit and vegetables
- Do not eat too many high fat foods
- Do not have sugary foods and drinks too often
- If you drink alcohol, drink sensibly

The 'Eatwell Guide' below shows the proportion of each food group which should be eaten to achieve a well balanced diet.



## Fruit and vegetables

Have at least 5 portions daily to provide fibre and eat a variety to obtain a range of vitamins and minerals.

You can choose from fresh, frozen, tinned, dried, or juiced.

One portion = 80g

- 1 apple, banana, pear, orange
- 2 plums
- 1 slice of large fruit e.g. melon, pineapple
- 3 heaped tablespoons of vegetables or fruit salad
- 1 heaped tablespoon of dried fruit
- 1 handful of grapes, berries
- A dessert bowl of salad
- A 150ml glass fruit juice (counts as a maximum of 1 portion per day)

Remember that potatoes don't count because they are a starchy food.

## Potatoes, bread, rice, pasta, and other starchy carbohydrates

Wholegrain, starchy carbohydrate foods should make up about a third of the food we eat, aim to have with each meal. They are a good source of energy, fibre, iron, and vitamin B. Some people think starchy foods are fattening, but they contain less than half the calories of fat. Watch

out for the added fats used for cooking and when serving, as this is what increases the calorie content. Choose wholegrain varieties wherever you can e.g. wholegrain bread, whole-wheat pasta, and brown rice.

## Beans, pulses, fish, eggs, meat, and other proteins

(also includes alternatives such as tofu and textured vegetable protein (TVP))

Aim to have 2 portions daily. Proteins are used for growth and repair of body tissues plus they provide iron, zinc, magnesium, vitamins B and D. Choose a variety of plant-based proteins (e.g. lentils, chickpeas, tofu), nuts, eggs, and lean meats with visible fat removed, Grill, dry roast, or microwave instead of frying. The Government recommends that we eat two portions of fish each week, one of which should be an oily fish (e.g. salmon, mackerel, trout or sardines,).

## Dairy and alternatives

This includes milk, cheese, yoghurts and their alternatives e.g. soya, rice and nut milks.

Aim to include 2-3 portions daily using low fat versions. Dairy and fortified alternatives are a good source of calcium, zinc, and vitamins A and B.

## Foods high in fat and/or sugar

These foods are high in calories and can contribute to weight gain which increases the risk of developing gallstones. It is therefore recommended that, as part of a healthy diet, these foods are used sparingly or limited to an occasional treat. Your body needs a small amount of fat so you should **not** follow a fat-free diet.

**Foods high in fat include:** butter, margarine and other spreading fats, cooking oils, oil-based salad dressings, mayonnaise, cream, fried foods, fatty meats, chips, chocolate, crisps, biscuits, pastries, cake, puddings, ice-cream, rich sauces, and gravies.

**Foods high in sugar include:** soft drinks (excluding diet drinks), sweets, chocolate, jam, sugar, cakes, puddings, biscuits, pastries, and ice-cream.

For more information visit the following websites;

- Food Standards Agency      **www.food.gov.uk**
- GUTS! UK                      **https://gutscharity.org.uk/**

*Written information cannot replace personalised recommendations. For further advice please seek a dietetic referral from your Consultant or GP.*

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