

Gallstones - Dietary Guidance for Patients

- Eat at least 5 portions of a variety of fruit and vegetables every day.
- Base meals on potatoes, bread, rice, pasta or other starchy carbohydrates; choosing wholegrain versions where possible.
- Include dairy foods such as milk, cheese and yoghurts or dairy alternatives such as soya milk products daily. Choose low fat versions (e.g. skimmed or semi-skimmed milk rather than full cream, low fat or fat free yogurts rather than creamier versions etc).
- Include beans, pulses, fish, eggs, meat and other protein rich foods (including 2 portions of fish a week, one of which should be oily). Choose to grill, poach or bake these foods rather than frying, choose leaner options of meat and remove any visible excess fat (e.g. visible fat on bacon or steak/drain fat off mince during cooking).
- Use small amounts of oils and spreads in cooking etc-opt for vegetable based oils (e.g. olive oil) rather than animal-based fats (e.g. lard or butter)
- Try to reduce or cut back on the amount of foods high in fat and/or sugar (e.g. crisps/sweets/chocolate/sugary fizzy drinks/biscuits/cakes)
- Ensure a good fluid intake-aim for at least 6-8 glasses/mugs of fluid per day

Some people may find that particular foods or drinks can trigger symptoms- make a note of any foods or drinks that you find problematic and try them again at a later date. Often, once symptoms have settled, most foods and drinks can be tolerated with no problems.

There is no need to avoid any particular foods or drinks after treatment to remove gallstones or the gallbladder, although it helps to continue to follow the healthy eating advice recommended above to reduce the chance of further gallstones developing (see below)

Is there anything I can do to help prevent gallstones?

As well as following the healthy eating guidance detailed above, the following may also help:

- **Weight loss:** Although there is limited evidence surrounding diet and the formation of gallstones, we know that there is a higher risk of developing gallstones if you are overweight. It therefore makes sense to make some healthy lifestyle changes to help lose weight if you are overweight or obese. Avoid rapid weight loss or overly-restrictive diets, as there is some evidence that these can actually increase the risk of gallstone formation. Instead, aim for gradual, steady weight loss. Speak to your Doctor or healthcare provider if you would like some support with weight loss.
- **Reducing saturated fat intake:** Because gallstones are made up of cholesterol, and we know that saturated fat can increase cholesterol levels, it is advisable to reduce saturated fat intake. Sources of saturated fat include:
 - Pies and pastries
 - Sausages and fatty cuts of meat
 - Cream
 - Cakes and biscuits
 - Cheese
 - Lard, butter and ghee

For further advice and support, visit NHSinform at: www.nhsinform.scot or telephone NHS inform on: 0800 22 44 88