



You came to the emergency department with pain caused by gallstones. Your tests today did not show a problem that needs you to stay in hospital now. This sheet explains what gallstones are, how to manage at home, and when to come back.

What is it?

The gallbladder is a small pouch under the liver that stores bile, a fluid that helps digest fat. Gallstones are small hard lumps that form inside it. If a stone blocks the way out, you can get strong pain in the upper right or middle of the belly, often after a fatty meal. The pain may spread to your back or right shoulder and usually settles within hours.

Looking after yourself at home

- Eat smaller meals, and choose foods low in fat. Avoid fried and very fatty food.
- Drink plenty of water.
- Rest when you have pain. A warm pack on the belly may help.
- Write down when pain happens and what you ate, to show your doctor.

Medicines

- For pain, you may take paracetamol unless your doctor told you not to. Follow the packet or your doctor's instructions.
- Ibuprofen may also help, unless you have a stomach ulcer, kidney disease, some types of asthma, or are pregnant.
- Take any other medicine you were given exactly as prescribed.

Follow-up

- See your family doctor or health centre within 1 to 2 weeks.
- Ask about referral to a surgeon. Removing the gallbladder is a common operation if the pain keeps coming back.

Come back to the emergency department or call an ambulance straight away if:

- Pain that lasts more than a few hours or keeps getting worse
- Fever, chills or shivering
- Yellow skin or yellow whites of the eyes
- Dark urine or pale, clay-coloured stools
- Vomiting that will not stop, or you cannot keep fluids down
- Severe pain spreading through to your back with vomiting



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This leaflet is general information to support the advice your doctor or nurse gave you today. It does not replace their advice. If you are worried, seek medical help.

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