

IRIDOLOGY

THE

GALLBLADDER

Compiled by

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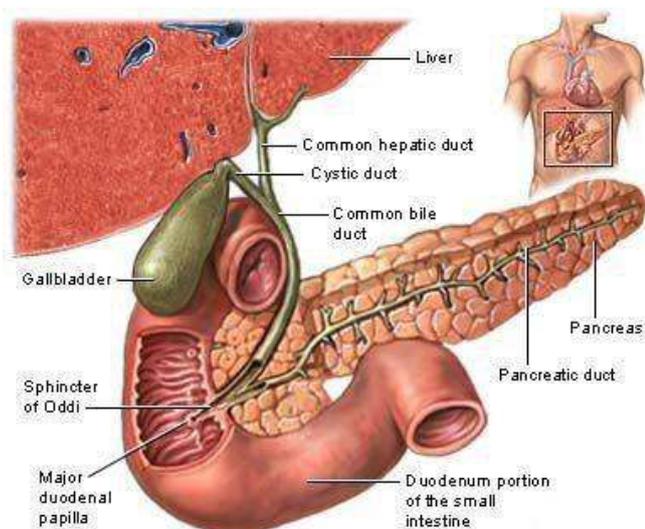
IMPORTANT

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Introduction

The gallbladder is a blue-green organ that is located on the underside of the liver. It is a pear-shaped sac, and it holds bile. The gall bladder is about 8cm long and is 2.5cm wide at its thickest part, and it holds about 32ml of bile. The gallbladder serves the function of concentrating and storing bile, produced in dilute form by the liver, and secreting the bile through the cystic ducts into the duodenum where it can help in digestion. During digestion of fats, it contracts, and sends bile into the first portion of the small intestine (duodenum). Blocking of the bile-carrying system may lead to liver disease (jaundice) and pain. This is a common condition in overweight, middle-aged women and may require removal.



Bile, also called gall, is a bitter, yellow-green secretion of the liver. Bile is composed of cholesterol, bile salts, and bile pigment and is stored in the gallbladder. It is released when fat enters the first part of the small intestine (duodenum). Bile emulsifies these fats, preparing them for further digestion and absorption in the small intestine.

Biliary calculus, also called choledocholithiasis or gallstone, is a stone formed in the biliary tract, consisting of bile pigments and calcium salts. Biliary calculi may cause jaundice, right-sided pain, obstruction, and inflammation of the gallbladder. If stones cannot pass into the duodenum, a cholangiogram will reveal their location, and they can be surgically removed.

(Picture right - Gall Stones)



Diseases of the Gallbladder

Diseases of the Gallbladder include:

Cholelithiasis - the presence of gallstones in the gallbladder. This condition affects about 20% of the population over age 40. It is more common in women. Many patients complain of general stomach discomfort, burping, and intolerance to certain foods. Other patients have no symptoms at all.

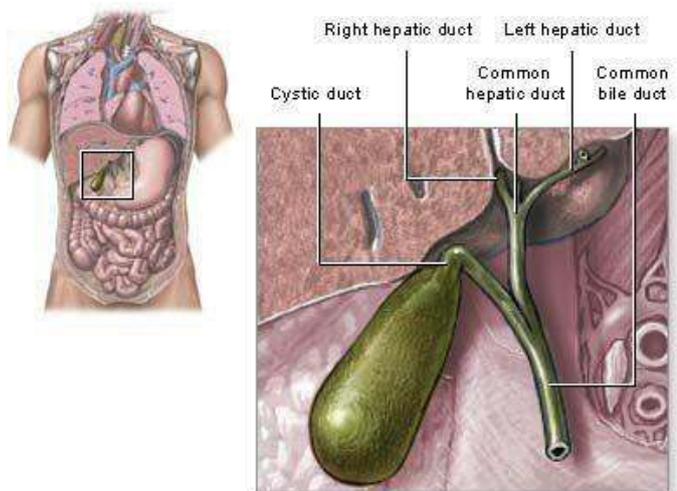
Cholangitis - inflammation of the bile ducts. It is caused either by bacterial invasion or by blocking of the ducts by stones or a tumour. The condition is marked by severe pain in the right upper stomach, liver disease (jaundice) if an obstruction is present, and intermittent fever.

Cholecystitis, and acute cholecystitis - sudden or long-term inflammation of the gallbladder.

Acute cholecystitis - usually caused by a gallstone that cannot pass through the bile duct. Pain is felt in the right upper part of the stomach. It goes together with nausea, vomiting, belching, and intestinal gas (flatulence). Diagnosis is usually made with x-rays. This is useful in ruling out appendicitis, intestinal obstruction, peptic ulcer, and other upper stomach disorders. Surgery is the usual treatment.

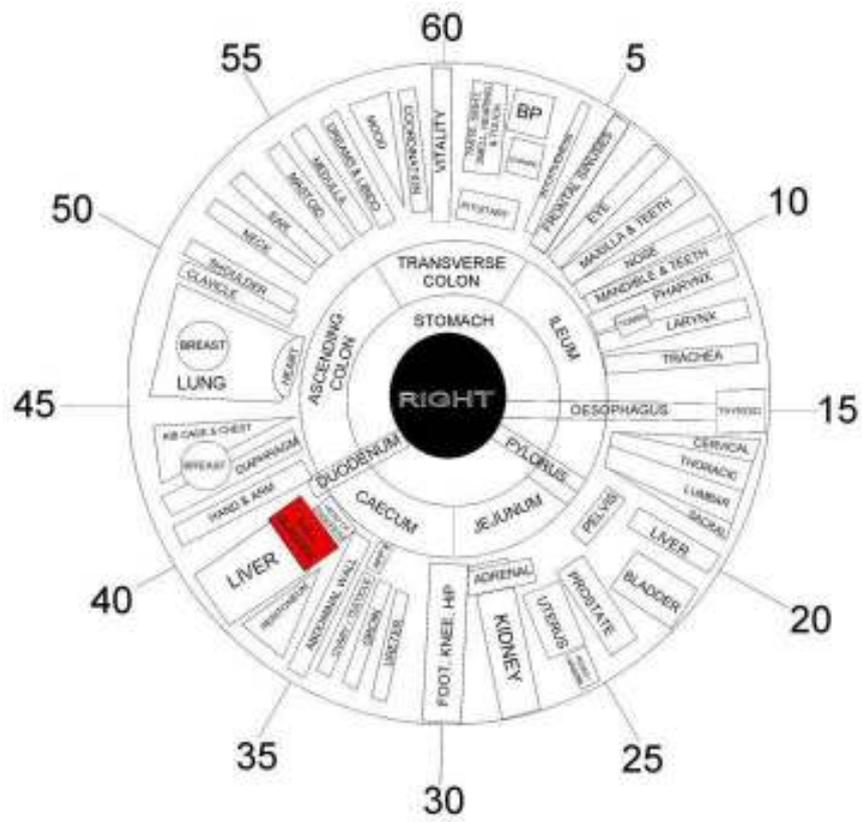
Chronic cholecystitis - the more common type, and has a slower beginning. Pain, often felt at night, or may follow a fatty meal. Complications include gallstones, disease of the pancreas, and cancerous growth (carcinoma) of the gallbladder. Again, correction is usually by surgery.

Gallbladder cancer - a cancer of the bile storage sac. Symptoms include loss of appetite, nausea, vomiting, weight loss, and severe pain near the right shoulder. Tumours of the gallbladder are often connected with gallstones. They are 3 to 4 times more common in women than in men, and they rarely occur before the age of 40. Physical examination shows an enlarged gallbladder in about half the cases. Complete removal of the gallbladder may cure the cancer, but partial removal of the liver also may be required.



The gallbladder is not critical to the survival of the human, and therefore may be removed without severely adverse effects.

For indications of gallbladder problems, look in the eye area as indicated in red on the following diagrams (the gallbladder is noted in the right eye only):



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