

## UG19lite Cholecystectomy and Exploration of the Bile Duct

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A more detailed version of this procedure specific information sheet is available. Please ask your health practitioner at Joondalup Health Campus for a copy.

**Write questions or notes here:**

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This document will give you information about a cholecystectomy and exploration of the bile duct. If you have any questions, you should ask your GP or other relevant health professional.

### What are common bile-duct stones?

Common bile-duct stones are gallstones that get stuck in your common bile-duct (see figure 1). They are common and can run in families. The risk of developing gallstones increases as you get older and if you eat a diet rich in fat.

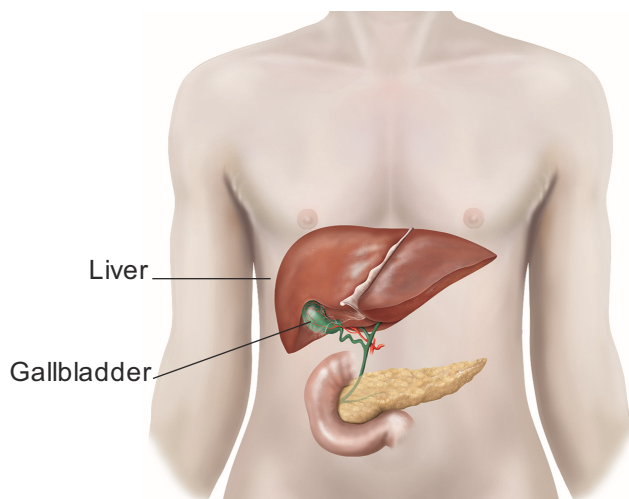


Figure 1

The position of the gallbladder

Common bile-duct stones can cause jaundice, serious infection of your bile ducts or inflammation of your pancreas.

### What are the benefits of surgery?

You should be free of pain and able to eat a normal diet.

### Are there any alternatives to surgery?

An ERCP is a procedure that uses a flexible telescope to examine your bile duct and to remove any gallstones.

It is possible to dissolve the stones or even shatter them into small pieces but these techniques involve unpleasant drugs that have side effects and a high failure rate.

Antibiotics can be used to treat any infection of your gallbladder and common bile duct. Eating a diet low in fat may help to prevent attacks of pain. However, these alternatives will not cure the condition and symptoms are likely to come back.

### What does the operation involve?

The operation is performed under a general anaesthetic and usually takes one to two hours.

Your surgeon will first look for and remove any stones from your common bile duct. To allow bile to drain out, they will usually insert a T-shaped tube into your common bile duct, with the other end coming out through your skin.

Your surgeon will then separate your gallbladder from your liver, and remove it.

### What complications can happen?

#### 1 General complications

- Pain
- Bleeding
- Infection of the surgical site (wound)
- Unsightly scarring
- Developing a hernia in the scar
- Blood clots

#### 2 Specific complications

- Damage to structures such as your bowel, bladder or blood vessels
- Developing a hernia near one of the cuts
- Surgical emphysema
- Retained stones
- Stones forming again
- Narrowing of your common bile duct
- Allergic reaction
- Leaking of bile or stones
- Infection of your skin
- Difficulty removing the tube
- Continued pain
- Diarrhoea
- Inflammation in the lining of your abdomen
- Bowel injury
- Continued bowel paralysis
- Serious damage to your liver
- Tissues can join together in an abnormal way

### How soon will I recover?

You should be able to go home within one to two days if you had keyhole surgery or after 4 to 5 days if you had open surgery.

You should be able to return to work after three to four weeks, depending on how much surgery you need and your type of work.

Regular exercise should help you to return to normal activities as soon as possible. Before you start exercising, ask the healthcare team or your GP for advice

You should make a full recovery and be able to return to normal activities.

## Summary

Gallstones can move into your common bile duct. An operation to remove your gallbladder and any stones in your common bile duct should result in you being free of pain and able to eat a normal diet.

## Acknowledgements

Author: Mr Simon Parsons DM FRCS (Gen. Surg.)

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