

LIVER and GALL BLADDER Health

Liver

The liver is a large organ in the abdomen that performs many important bodily functions, including blood filtering. It is also considered a gland because it makes chemicals the body needs. Certain diseases and lifestyles can damage the liver, but there are many ways to protect this vital organ. Your liver is the biggest organ in your body and it performs hundreds of functions every day.

What is the liver?

The human liver is an organ and gland in the human body. It's spongy, wedge-shaped, reddish-brown in color and about the size of a football. The size varies based on how tall you are and how much you weigh.

The liver is an essential organ, performing hundreds of functions necessary to sustain life. It's also a gland because it makes proteins and hormones that other parts of the body need.

Weighing, on average, about three pounds in an adult, the liver is the largest internal organ. Under normal conditions, the liver is located on the right side of the body, under the ribs. In a condition called situs inversus, the liver is located on the left side.

Issues related to the liver are called hepatic conditions. A medical professional who specializes in the liver is a [hepatologist](#).

What does the liver do?

The liver has hundreds of jobs. Some of the most vital are:

- Cleans toxins (harmful substances) out of the blood.
- Gets rid of old red blood cells.
- Makes bile, a fluid that helps the body digest (break down) food.
- Metabolizes proteins, carbohydrates and fats so your body can use them.
- Produces substances to help blood clot.
- Regulates the amount of blood in the body.
- Stores glycogen (an energy source) and vitamins to be used by the body later.

What are the parts of the liver?

The liver has two main parts: the larger right lobe and the smaller left lobe.

The lobes contain many blood vessels. Blood travels through the liver. The liver filters (cleans) the blood, removing toxins and waste that eventually leave the body through urine and feces.

The lobes also contain thousands of lobules (small lobes). These lobules connect with many bile ducts, tubes that transport bile from the liver to the small intestine.

What conditions and disorders affect the liver?

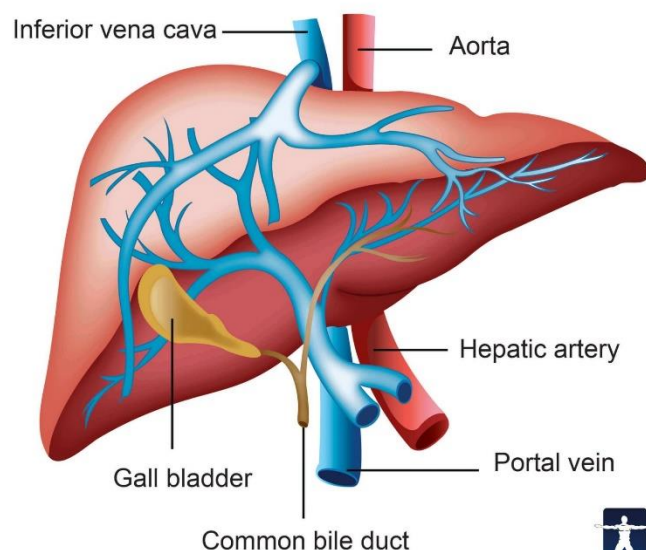
Many conditions can affect the liver. Among the most common are:

- Diseases that occur when a person consumes too many toxins, such as [alcohol-related liver disease](#) and [fatty liver disease](#) (extra fat).
- Inherited diseases like [hemochromatosis](#) (iron overload) and [Wilson disease](#) (too much copper in the body).
- [Liver cancer](#), when abnormal cells grow too quickly.
- Problems when the immune system attacks the liver, such as [autoimmune hepatitis](#), [primary sclerosing cholangitis](#) and [primary biliary cholangitis](#).
- Viral infections, such as [hepatitis A](#), [hepatitis B](#) and [hepatitis C](#).

Many of these conditions can lead to [cirrhosis \(scarring\) of the liver](#).

Sometimes, damaged liver tissue can regenerate, or grow back. Other times, liver disease can cause serious symptoms and even be life-threatening.

Human Liver Anatomy



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What are the symptoms of liver problems?

When a person has a liver problem, one of the most common symptoms is [jaundice](#).

With jaundice, the skin and whites of the eyes turn yellow because of too much bilirubin in the blood. [Bilirubin](#) is a yellow waste product the liver gets rid of when it breaks down red blood cells. Higher levels of bilirubin indicate a possible problem in the liver.

Other symptoms of liver problems may include:

- Build-up of fluid in the belly area ([ascites](#)).
- Easy [bruising](#).
- [Itchy skin](#).
- [Low blood pressure](#).
- [Pain in the abdomen](#).
- [Swelling in the legs or ankles](#).
- Tremors (shaking).
- Weakness, loss of balance or constant fatigue.
- [Confusion or loss of orientation](#)

How can I keep my liver healthy?

To keep your liver healthy and functioning well, try to follow these tips:

- Avoid toxins, such as chemicals, smoking and illegal drugs.
- Don't share needles, razors, toothbrushes or any other personal items, which can spread viruses.
- Drink alcohol only in moderation.
- Follow healthcare professionals' instructions about medications, especially warnings against mixing medications and alcohol.
- Maintain a healthy weight, including eating a nutritious diet and exercising regularly.
- Practice safe sex to avoid hepatitis infection.
- Talk to your healthcare provider about vaccinations against hepatitis.
- Wash your hands frequently.

When should I seek medical attention?

If you have any symptoms of liver problems, especially jaundice or belly pain, talk to a healthcare provider. Anytime you have severe pain in your abdomen, get immediate medical care.

How do I know if I'm at risk for liver problems?

You may be at risk for liver problems if you:

- Are exposed to chemicals regularly.
- Have overweight/obesity.
- Drink a lot of alcohol.
- Have relatives who've had [liver disease](#).
- Practice poor personal hygiene, such as having unprotected sex, sharing personal items and not washing your hands often.
-



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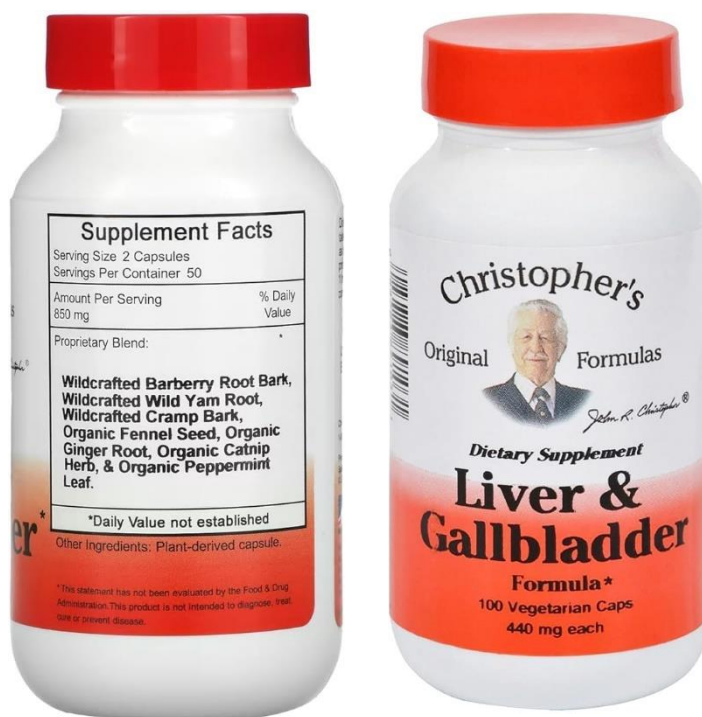
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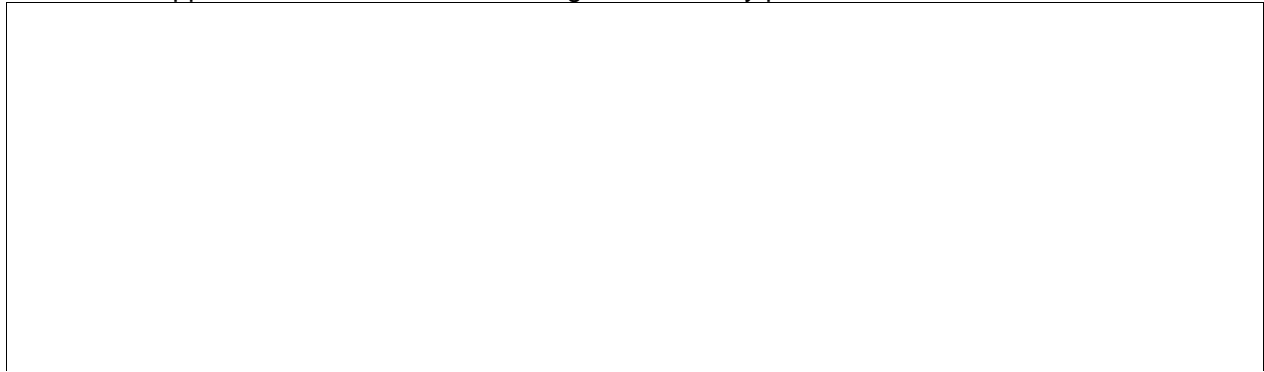
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- **Powerful Digestive Enzymes:** This powerful herbal blend works together to promote proper digestive system function, with a focus on the liver & gallbladder.
- **Plant-based Ingredients:** Made with plant-derived capsules and organic and wildcrafted herbs, Christopher's Original Formulas Liver & Gallbladder Formula offers a natural alternative to synthetic supplements.
- **Natural Benefits:** Promotes proper digestive function, with a focus on liver & gallbladder support. Suitable for adults of all ages and dietary preferences.



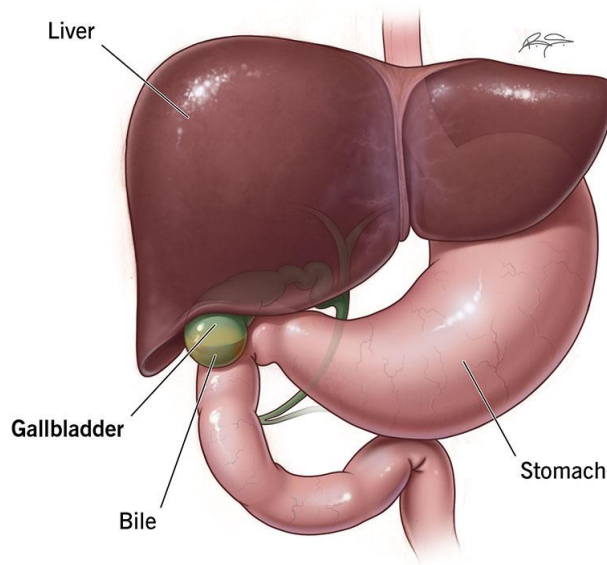
Gallbladder

Your gallbladder is a small, pear-shaped organ located under your liver that stores and releases bile. Bile is the fluid your liver produces that helps digest fats in the food you eat.

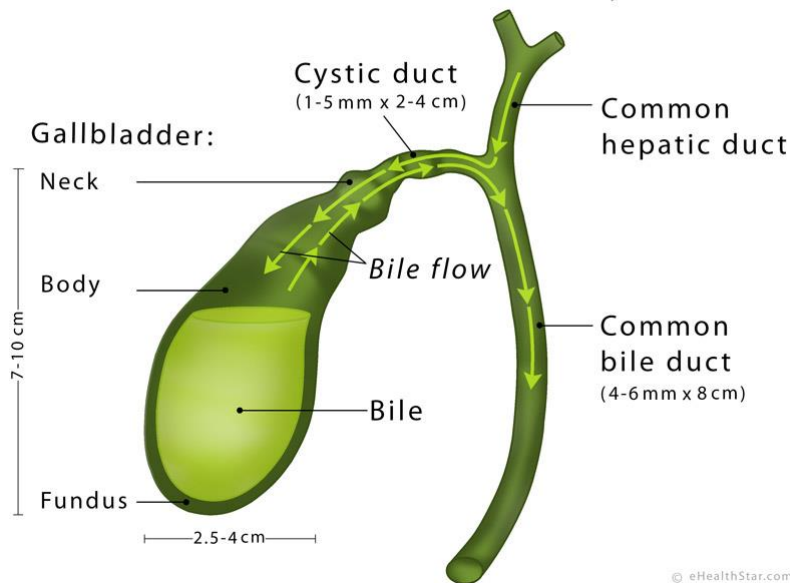
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Overview



Gallbladder Anatomy



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What is the gallbladder?

Your gallbladder is a small, pear-shaped organ that stores and releases bile. [Bile](#) is the fluid your liver produces that helps digest fats in the food you eat.

Where is the gallbladder located?

Your gallbladder is located in the upper right part of your abdomen (belly). It sits just under your liver.

Function

What is the function of the gallbladder?

Your gallbladder is part of your [digestive system](#). Its main function is to store bile. Bile helps your digestive system break down fats. Bile is a mixture of mainly cholesterol, bilirubin and bile salts.

How does the gallbladder help other organs?

Your gallbladder is connected to other parts of your digestive system through a series of bile ducts called the [biliary tract](#). The biliary tract (sometimes called biliary system or biliary tree) is a pipe-like system that carries bile from your liver to your [small intestine](#).

What does the gallbladder do?

Before you start eating, your gallbladder is full of bile. When you start eating, your gallbladder receives signals to contract and squeeze the stored bile through the biliary tract. The bile eventually finds its way to your largest bile duct, the common bile duct. Bile passes through the common bile duct into the duodenum, the first part of your small intestine, where it mixes with food waiting to be [digested](#). After you eat, your gallbladder is empty and resembles a deflated balloon, waiting to be filled up again.

Conditions and Disorders

Christine Lee, MD explains what gallstones are and how they're treated.

What are common issues that affect the gallbladder?

Several conditions can cause problems in your gallbladder. The most common condition is gallstones. Gallstones are typically harmless but can sometimes lead to disease states. [Gallbladder diseases](#) include:

- **Gallstones**: Gallstones are pebble-like objects made of bile material that develop in the gallbladder or bile ducts. They can be as tiny as grains of sand to as large as golf balls. They're usually harmless but can cause pain, nausea or inflammation.
- **Cholecystitis**: Cholecystitis is inflammation of your gallbladder. It can occur when a gallstone blocks bile from exiting your gallbladder. Cholecystitis causes fever and pain and usually requires surgery.
- **Gallstone pancreatitis**: Gallstone pancreatitis is inflammation of your pancreas. It occurs when a gallstone travels down the common bile duct and blocks the pancreatic duct at a common point just before draining into the small intestine.
- **Gallbladder cancer**: Gallbladder cancer is rare. You might feel pain in the right upper quadrant of the abdomen. But, it is far more likely for this pain to occur due to another condition.

What are the signs or symptoms of gallbladder problems?

The symptoms of gallbladder problems vary. Some people don't feel gallstones or even know they have them. But if gallstones block the flow of bile, they can affect your gallbladder or pancreas. You may experience the following symptoms:

- **Upper right abdominal pain**.
- **Upper mid abdominal pain**.
- Upper right abdominal pain radiating to the right shoulder or back.
- Pain after eating a fatty meal.
- **Jaundice** (yellowing of your skin and whites of your eyes).
- **Nausea and vomiting**.
- **Fever**.
- **Chills**.
- **Light-brown pee** or light-colored poop.

How are gallbladder issues treated?

Most gallbladder issues are treated with the removal of your gallbladder. Surgery to remove your gallbladder is called a **cholecystectomy**. Your gallbladder is not an essential organ. This means you can live a normal life without a gallbladder. When a surgeon removes your gallbladder, bile will flow out of your bile ducts directly into your digestive system instead of being stored in your gallbladder first.

Surgeons can perform cholecystectomies three ways:

- **Open cholecystectomy**: With open surgery, your surgeon operates through one large incision. Your surgeon may perform an open cholecystectomy if your gallbladder is severely inflamed or scarred.
- **Laparoscopic cholecystectomy**: With laparoscopic surgery, your surgeon operates through a few small incisions. Laparoscopic surgery generally leads to

a faster recovery, less pain and smaller scars. In most cases, cholecystectomies will be performed laparoscopically.

- **Robotic cholecystectomy:** This is a more recent method and is available in a small number of centers.

Care

Does my weight affect my chances for gallstones?

People who are overweight — especially women — are more likely to develop gallstones. This is because people who are overweight may have more [cholesterol](#) in their bile. More cholesterol in your bile can cause gallstones. People who are overweight may also have bigger gallbladders that don't work as well. Losing weight too quickly may raise your chances of forming gallstones as well. But slowly losing weight may help you prevent them.

How will my diet change after gallbladder surgery?

Your gallbladder was not essential, but it did help you digest fatty [foods](#). Immediately after gallbladder removal, you'll want to avoid fried and greasy foods.

After surgery, fat calories should make up no more than 30% of your diet. Take your time reintroducing high-fiber foods such as whole grains, nuts, seeds and vegetables. They may cause severe [bloating](#) and [gas](#) if you eat them too quickly.