

Save Your Gallbladder with Traditional Chinese Medicine

By Toni Eatros, MS, Dipl Ac, AP

Gallbladder disease is one of the most common and costly of all digestive diseases. It is a degenerative disease that is clearly related to diet. An estimated 20 million Americans have gallbladder disease. Gallbladder removal is now the most common type of major surgery performed.

Cholelithiasis (gallstones) is a condition where sediment settles out of the bile and forms accumulations that resemble stones, sand, or mud in the gall bladder. Since the gallbladder acts as a reservoir for bile, it becomes less efficient when clogged with sediment, and acute problems result when stones become lodged in the bile duct leading from the gall bladder to the duodenum. Cholelithiasis is often accompanied by cholecystitis (inflammation of the gallbladder).

Some Factors that Contribute to the Development of Gallbladder Disease:

- Gender - Female
- Age - 40+
- History of several pregnancies
- Women taking estrogen hormone replacement
- Obesity
- Constipation
- Diet - High intake of fatty foods and sugar
- Heredity - more frequently Caucasians, Mexican Americans and Native Americans
- Chronically high stress levels

Symptoms of Sediment in the Gallbladder:

- Indigestion
- Gas and flatulence
- Constipation
- Nausea and Vomiting
- Lack of Appetite

- Periodic pain below the right front side of the rib cage
- Tension in the back of the shoulders near the neck
- Pain in the right upper arm or under the right shoulder blade
- Low grade fever
- Bitter taste in the mouth
- Aversion to greasy and fatty foods
- Chest pain
- Anxiety
- Irritability, Impatience, Anger, Frustration

In western medicine, if cholelithiasis and cholecystitis are asymptomatic, treatment may not be necessary, as risks often outweigh the benefits. If symptomatic, bile acids [such as Ursodiol (Ursodeoxycholic acid)] are usually given to dissolve stones. However, these drugs must be given for a long period of time, and have only limited success rate of about 30%. These drugs may also cause side effects such as bladder pain, bloody or cloudy urine, burning or painful urination, dizziness, fast heartbeat, indigestion, lower back or side pain, severe nausea, shortness of breath, skin rash, stomach pain, vomiting, weakness, wheezing, and others. Lastly, if drugs fail, invasive treatments such as surgery and sonic shock wave are the last alternatives.

There seems to be an unnerving trend in the rise of the number of gallbladder removals that are being performed. Advances in surgical technique, make this surgery much less risky than it once was, and it seems physicians may be prematurely removing this organ without trying all of the available alternatives.

Many patients come to my office in search of ways to avoid having their gallbladders removed. Just because you have gallstones or inflammation of the gallbladder,



does not mean you should rush right out and have it removed. Cholelithiasis and cholecystitis are two conditions that are treated very successfully with herbs, diet modification and acupuncture.

I have been using Dissolve (GS), a Chinese herbal formula by Evergreen Herbs. The main mechanisms of action of herbs are to dissolve and expel stones from the gallbladder and bile duct, decrease inflammation, and reduce pain. Depending on the number and size of the stones, the duration of treatment ranges from days to months. Generally, if herbal therapy is ineffective after 3 months, then patients should be referred to western medicine.

Addressing the diet is of utmost importance when healing the gallbladder. During this process it is very important to avoid foods high in saturated fats and cholesterol, such as heavy meats, dairy and eggs. I recommend leaning toward a vegetarian diet during this time. Customized gallbladder cleanses and flushes are recommended under my supervision.

Join my other patients that are currently using the amazing combination of herbal therapy, nutritional therapy and acupuncture offered at Acupuncture & Natural Health Solutions to feel better and avoid gallbladder surgery. **Call now, 239-260-4566 or schedule online at www.AcupunctureSolutionsOnline.com**

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