

# Gallbladder Surgery

## Patient Guide



**FISHER | TITUS**  
MEDICAL CENTER

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### **PATIENT AND FAMILY EDUCATION IS IMPORTANT.**

**This educational book contains medical information specifically designed to help you understand your health needs.**

To help you the most, it is important for you to continue using this book after you return home. Write information down in this book and take it with you to doctor appointments and if you return to the hospital.

Use this book as a guide to:

- Answer questions about your condition
- Learn about treatment and medications
- Understand diet restrictions
- Know when to call your doctor
- Learn self-care behaviors that will help you prevent your condition from worsening

Insert Call Out Here

## Questions and Answers about Gallbladder Surgery

**Question:** What is the difference between laparoscopy and open surgery?

**Answer:** Laparoscopy is done with a long, thin device containing a light and camera called a laparoscope. This device will send live video from inside the abdomen during surgery allowing the doctor to see what's going on. For laparoscopy, only small incisions are needed to insert the scope and other tools.

In an open surgery, uses one larger incision through which the doctor is able to reach the gallbladder and perform the procedure. Because the incision is larger and the procedure is more invasive, open surgery will likely take longer to recover from.

**Question:** Which type of surgery will I have?

**Answer:** The most common method for removing the gallbladder is laparoscopy. However, certain factors may mean open surgery is the safer option for you. Your surgeon will discuss with you which option is better for you case. Be sure to ask any questions you might have. Keep in mind, there is a chance that your doctor will need to switch from laparoscopy to an open procedure during surgery.

**Question:** Why not just remove the gallstones?

**Answer:** Unless, the gallbladder is removed completely, it is likely that more gallstones will form. However, there are other reasons besides gallstones that cause the gallbladder to need removed.

### **If you are pregnant...**

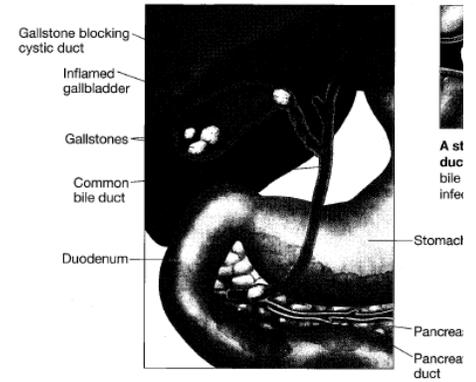
Because of hormone changes, gallbladder problems are more likely during pregnancy. If you are pregnant and your gallbladder needs removed, your procedure will likely be delayed until after you give birth. However, if your symptoms are severe it may be advised to have surgery during your pregnancy in order to protect your health and the health of the baby. Your doctor will discuss the options with you.

## Forming Gallstones

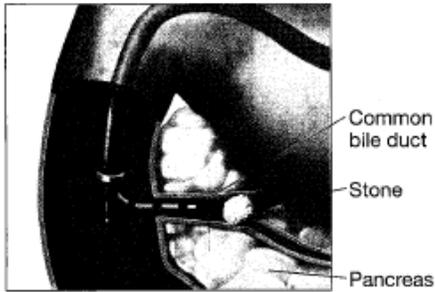
The most common cause of gallbladder issues is gallstones. Gallstones form when substances in the bile crystallize and become a solid, like a stone. Sometimes, a patient may have gallstones and not experience any symptoms. But, other times, they can irritate the walls of the gallbladder. Additionally, there is a risk that gallstones will move into and block nearby ducts. This blocking can lead to pain, nausea, infection and jaundice—a buildup of bile chemicals in the blood—which causes yellowing of the skin and eyes, dark urine, and itching.

### Problems in the Common Bile Duct

The common bile duct is the junction of ducts between the liver and gallbladder and it is a common place where blockages occur—most often by a stone moving from the gallbladder into the duct. When the common bile duct is blocked, bile backs up into the liver and causes jaundice. If a gallstone blocks the junction with the pancreatic duct, the pancreas can become inflamed thus causing pancreatitis, a serious medical condition requiring immediate treatment.



**A stone in the common bile duct can block the flow of bile and cause inflammation, infection, and jaundice.**



ERCP can find and remove stones from the common bile duct.

## Your Treatment Options

After conducting a complete evaluation, your doctor will sit down and discuss your treatment options with you. It is important to learn all the benefits and risks of all treatment options to ensure you are best informed and able to help your doctor ensure your needs are met. If you have any questions, be sure to ask your doctor.

### Tests You May Have

Your doctor will likely need to order one or more of the below tests to learn more about your gallbladder problem.

- **Imaging Tests** – If your doctor suspects you have gallstones, they will schedule you for an ultrasound. An ultrasound uses painless sound waves to check your abdomen for gallstones. Additionally a CT scan—a series of x-rays showing detailed images of the body—may be done to help your doctor rule out any other possible causes of your abdominal pain.

- **HIDA** – A Hepatobiliary scan uses a marker (radioactive fluid) to check your gallbladder function. A HIDA scan does this by showing the filling and emptying of the gallbladder as well as showing whether any bile ducts are blocked. When the test is complete, the radioactive fluid will pass safely from the body.

- **ERCP** – An Endoscopic Retrograde Cholangiopancreatography uses a thin, flexible scope which is guided from the mouth down to the stomach and into the common bile duct. The scope helps to find stones that may be blocking the bile duct as well as maybe helping to remove stones that have traveled to the duct. ERCP may be done before or after surgery and sometimes done both before and after.

### Be Informed

If you've experienced one or more painful attacks, it may be recommended that you have your gallbladder removed thus preventing future attacks and preventing complications. After the gallbladder is removed, your body is still able to make bile in the liver to aid in digestion. It is important that you know what all your treatment options are and are aware of the risks of having and *not* having surgery.

### If you wait to have surgery...

You may not experience immediate problems from your gallstones. The longer you delay surgery the more likely complications become. These complications include:

- Continued or worsened pain
- Blockage of the common bile duct which can cause infection or jaundice
- Sudden severe inflammation of the gallbladder or pancreas

## Getting Ready for your Surgery

Be sure to follow all instructions given to you by your doctor about getting ready for surgery. These include:

- Talk to your doctor about medications, supplements, or herbs you take. You may be asked to discontinue taking them before your surgery.
- Stop taking medications as directed. If you take a medication that prevents blood clots, be sure to ask your doctor what you should do.
- Stop eating and drinking as instructed before your surgery
- Arrange for an adult family member or friend to give you a ride to and from surgery

## Risks and Complications

Although gallbladder surgery is safe, there are risks and complications associated with it as with all surgery. Be sure to discuss any concerns you have with your doctor. Risks and possible complications include:

- Bleeding, blood clots
- Infection
- Inflamed pancreas (pancreatitis)
- Injury to the common bile duct, nearby organs, or blood vessels
- Prolonged diarrhea
- Bile leakage into the abdomen
- Neuroma (painful spot) or numbness near incisions
- Hernia at an incision site
- Bowel obstruction

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# Your Surgery

Most gallbladder problems are treated using laparoscopy but sometimes it may be necessary to complete the procedure using open surgery. There is also a chance that your doctor may need to switch from laparoscopy to open surgery during the procedure. This does not necessarily mean something is wrong, it may just mean a larger incision is required to safely complete surgery.

## The Day of Surgery

During surgery preparations, you may be asked to give your name and procedure several times for your safety. You will be given an intravenous (IV) line to provide fluids and medications. Then, you will be given general anesthesia to prevent pain. The anesthesia will put you in a deep sleep state during the surgery.

**Laparoscopic Surgery (diagrams)** Small incisions are made in the abdomen and harmless gas is used to lift the abdominal wall away from the internal organs letting your surgeon have a view of the gallbladder through the camera on the laparoscope.

Small metal or plastic clips are used to close off the bile duct and blood vessels. These will stay in the body and help prevent bleeding and bile leaks. Once the clips are in place, the gallbladder is detached from the liver.

The gallbladder may need to be put into a bag to prevent leaks. If this is necessary, the top is raised through an incision and the contents, including any stones, may be removed before the gallbladder is removed.

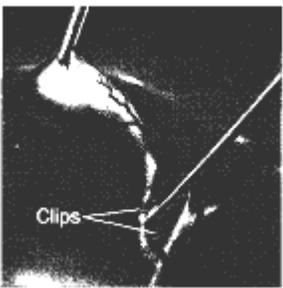
**Open Surgery (diagrams)** A single incision is made in the abdomen either in the upper right side or middle. This open incision gives your doctor a view of the gallbladder and bile ducts.

Small clips or sutures are used to close off the bile duct and blood vessels. These will stay in the body and help prevent bleeding and bile leaks.

Once the clips are secured, the gallbladder is detached from the liver and then removed from the abdomen. Once the gallbladder is removed, bile will flow directly from the liver to the small intestine. To finish, the incision is closed with sutures and staples.

## Using X-Rays

In some cases, a cholangiogram catheter may be inserted in the bile duct. This is a thin tube used to inject contrast fluid so that an x-ray may be taken of the duct to show whether any stones have moved from the gallbladder into the duct.

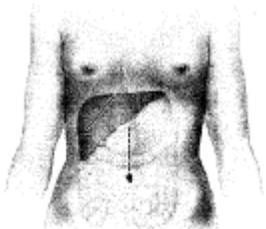


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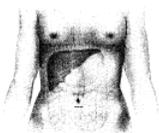
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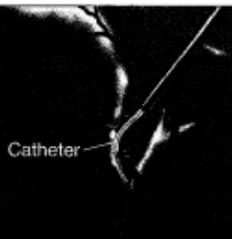
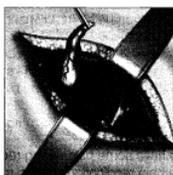
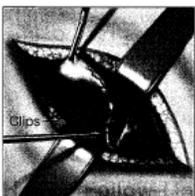
Possible incision sites

### Laparoscopic Surgery

Small incisions are made in the abdomen. Harmless gas is used to lift the abdominal wall away from the internal organs. This lets your surgeon have a view of the gallbladder through the laparoscope.



Possible incision sites



### Using X-Rays

In some cases, a catheter is inserted into the bile duct to inject contrast fluid. An X-ray is then taken of the duct to see if any stones have moved from the gallbladder into the duct.

# Robotic Surgery

## ***da Vinci* Surgery**

Ask your doctor about multi-port and single-site *da Vinci* surgery. Single-site is performed through a single incision using state of the art precision instruments. Patients who choose single-site *da Vinci* surgery have virtually no scar remaining due to the surgery being performed through a single incision in the belly button. By entering through this small incision in the belly button, surgeons are able to dramatically limit visible scarring.

The primary potential benefits of *Single-Site da Vinci* surgery include:

- Minimal scarring
- Minimal pain
- Low blood loss
- Fast recovery
- Short hospital stay
- High patient satisfaction

As with any surgery, however, these benefits cannot be guaranteed since surgery is unique to each patient and procedure.

### **The Enabling Technology** *da Vinci Surgical System*

The *da Vinci* Surgical System is designed to provide surgeons with enhanced capabilities, including high-definition 3D vision and a magnified view. Though it is often called a “robot,” *da Vinci* cannot act on its own. The surgery is entirely by your doctor. He or she controls the *da Vinci* System, which translates all hand movements into smaller, more precise movements of tiny instruments inside your body.

Together, *da Vinci* technology allows your doctor to perform complex procedures through just a few tiny openings. As a result, you can get back to your life without the usual recovery following major surgery.

The *da Vinci* System has been used successfully worldwide in hundreds of thousands of procedures to date.

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DEPRESSION and

## Breaking Free: DEPRESSION & CONGESTIVE HEART FAILURE



Depression is a condition in which a person feels discouraged, sad, hopeless, unmotivated or disinterested in life in general. When these feelings last for a short period of time, it may be a case of “the blues.” But when such feeling last for more than two weeks and when the feelings interfere with daily activities such as taking care of family, spending time with friends, or going to work or school, it's likely a major depressive episode. Major depression is a treatable illness that affects the way a person thinks, feels, behaves and functions.

A sudden or unexpected health event - such as a heart attack, stroke, diagnosis of cancer, or other serious illness or injury - can change your life in many ways. Feelings of shock, anger, grief, loss and sadness are common. These feelings usually pass with time, however, if they cause ongoing stress, you may be at greater risk of developing depression and anxiety.

Similarly, if you live with a chronic illness (e.g. heart disease, diabetes, arthritis or asthma), you are also at greater risk of developing depression and anxiety. Less common chronic physical illnesses that can also be associated with depression include chronic pain, Parkinson's Disease and Chronic Fatigue Syndrome.

Sometimes, it can be difficult to know whether you are feeling down because of your physical health, or if you do actually have symptoms of depression or anxiety. Sometimes it can be both. If you're unsure if what you're feeling is a normal reaction to what is happening in your life, talk to your doctor, another health professional or a member of your health care team. With open discussion, they can help you to work out what's going on and whether you could benefit from additional advice or treatment.

# The Benefits of Becoming TOBACCO FREE



## LEARN MORE

You can learn more about our quit smoking programs online at [fisher-titus.org](http://fisher-titus.org) or call us at 419-668-8108, ext. 6320.

Our Tobacco Educators are happy to help you create a quitting plan.

## PLANNING TO QUIT SMOKING IS A BIG STEP

Only you can decide if and when you are ready to quit. Quitting is hard, but the benefits will be worth it. We, at Fisher-Titus Medical Center, are committed to helping people become ex-tobacco users and would like to help you create a quitting plan that works for you. Your plan will involve coping skills to help you get through the urges to smoke, ways to modify routines, and a strategy to prevent relapse.

### The Benefits of Becoming Tobacco Free

#### HEALTH BENEFITS

- Reduced risk of lung cancer, heart disease, and chronic lung disease
- Fewer wrinkles and softer skin
- Improved sense of taste and smell

#### FAMILY BENEFITS

- Reduced exposure to second hand smoke
- Sets a good example for children

#### FINANCIAL BENEFITS

- Save hundreds of dollars each year
- Save money on medical bills
- Save money on insurance premiums

Learn about our smoking cessation programs at [www.fisher-titus.org](http://www.fisher-titus.org), or call us at 419-668-8101, ext. 6320. Our Tobacco Educators would be happy to help you create a quitting plan.

# Where to FIND HELP



For your convenience, below are some agencies and services available in the Erie and Huron County area. This shouldn't be considered a complete list; please contact your healthcare provider for more information.

## CARDIAC REHAB

### Fisher-Titus Medical Center

419-660-2600 HURON COUNTY  
1-800-668-8788 ext 6325 ERIE COUNTY

## MENTAL HEALTH ISSUES

### Firelands Counseling & Recovery Services

419-668-3737 HURON COUNTY  
419-557-5177 ERIE COUNTY

**Dr. Upender Gehlot**  
**Rachel Velishek, LPCC**  
419-668-0311

**Hotline**  
1-800-826-1306

**Alzheimer's Support Group**  
419-668-8101 ext 3112 HURON COUNTY

## NATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS

**American Cancer Society**  
888-227-2345

**American Diabetes Association**  
1-800-342-2383

**American Heart Association**  
1-877-242-4277

**American Lung Association**  
1-800-586-4872

**American Red Cross**  
419-626-1641 HURON COUNTY  
1-800-589-2286 ERIE COUNTY

## LOCAL OFFICES / ORGANIZATIONS

**Area Agency on Aging, Inc.**  
Passport, Long-term Care, HEAP, Heating  
Bill Assistance  
419-524-4144 - Mansfield HURON COUNTY

**Carriage House of Fisher-Titus Medical Center**  
1-800-860-5799 HURON COUNTY

**Catholic Charities**  
Financial Classes, Adult Advocacy, Miriam House  
419-668-3073 HURON COUNTY

**Community Action Commission**  
HEAP, PIPP, Summer Cooling, Ohio Benefit Bank,  
Various Other Assistance Programs  
419-668-9823 HURON COUNTY  
419-935-7232 WILLARD

(continued next page)

## 10. COMMUNITY RESOURCES

### Huron County Job and Family Services

Children's Services, Family Support Services,  
Workforce Development, Adult Services,  
Child Support

419-668-8126 HURON COUNTY  
419-626-6781 ERIE COUNTY

### Domestic Violence

1-800-931-7233

### Transit & Taxis

419-663-3340 HURON COUNTY TRANSIT  
419-706-8294 TERRY'S TAXI  
419-577-6178 TIJUANA

### Suicide Prevention Hotline

1-800-784-2443 HURON COUNTY

### Public Health

Women, Infants and Children, Early  
Intervention, Flu Shots, Immunizations

419-668-1652 HURON COUNTY  
419-626-5623 ERIE COUNTY

### Help Line Fisher-Titus Medical Center Quality & Case Management

419-668-8101 ext. 6356 HURON COUNTY

### Home Health Agencies

419-668-8101 ext. 6356 HURON COUNTY

### Kidney Foundation of Ohio, Inc.

216-771-2700 CLEVELAND

### Services for the Aging Meals on Wheels

419-668-8821 HURON COUNTY

### Salvation Army

419-929-3320 NEW LONDON 567-224-1523 PLYMOUTH  
419-668-4090 NORWALK 419-933-2954 WILLARD

### Social Security

1-800-772-1213 NATIONAL  
1-866-588-7397 LOCAL

### Stein Hospice

1-800-625-5692 HURON COUNTY

### Veteran Services

419-668-4150 HURON COUNTY

### United Fund / United Way

419-668-0269 HURON COUNTY  
419-625-4672 ERIE COUNTY

### Wheelchair Van/ NCEMS

419-663-1367 HURON COUNTY

## HURON COUNTY FOOD PANTRIES

### Plymouth Shiloh Co-Op

419-933-2568

### Fish and Loaves

419-484-2814 BELLEVUE

### Our Lady of Lourdes

419-929-4410 NEW LONDON

### Norwalk Alliance

419-668-9208

### Salvation Army

419-929-3320 NEW LONDON 567-224-1523 PLYMOUTH  
419-668-4090 NORWALK 419-933-2954 WILLARD

### Norwalk Area Food Bank

419-660-1144

### Willard Area Food Bank

419-933-4146

### Wakeman Caring

440-839-2023

### Greenwich/North Fairfield United Methodist Church

419-744-2359

### Victory Baptist

419-668-6532 NORWALK

### Monroeville Congregational Community Church

419-465-2165

GET CONNECTED WITH  
AVAILABLE COMMUNITY RESOURCES

To find or give help, call 211.





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800.589.3862

[Fisher-Titus.org](http://Fisher-Titus.org)