

Let's Talk About...

Cholecystitis: Gallbladder inflammation

What causes cholecystitis?

Cholecystitis happens when the gallbladder becomes inflamed (red and swollen). It is usually caused by gallstones, stone-like objects that grow from extra bile or cholesterol in the gallbladder. The gallstones can block bile ducts, which allow bile to leave the gallbladder. When bile can't leave the gallbladder, it builds up and causes inflammation. Your child may also have cholecystitis if they have scarring in the bile ducts that blocks the bile or a tumor in the gallbladder.

What are the signs of cholecystitis?

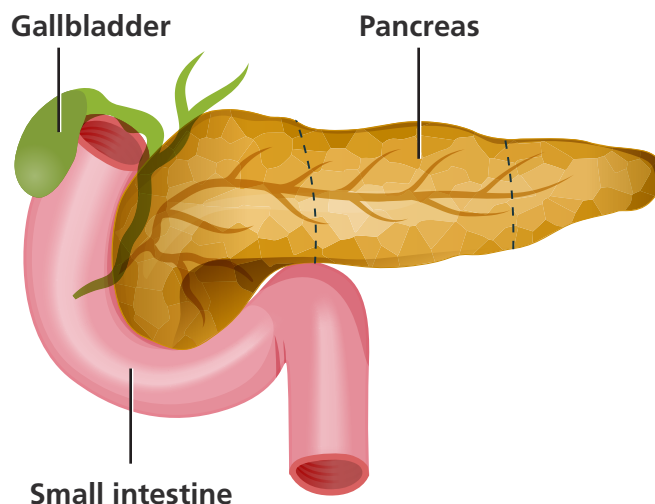
Your child may have some of the following signs of cholecystitis, usually after eating a large or fatty meal:

- Pain in the upper right abdomen that moves to the right shoulder or back
- Nausea
- Fever
- Vomiting
- A tender abdomen when it is touched

How is cholecystitis diagnosed?

Your child's healthcare provider will ask about your child's symptoms and medical history. Your child may need the following to check for cholecystitis:

- An abdominal ultrasound
- An CT scan (series of images of your child's body)
- Blood tests
- A hepatobiliary (HIDA) scan, which tracks how bile moves from the liver to the small intestine



How is cholecystitis treated?

If your child has cholecystitis, they will probably need to stay in the hospital. Treatments for cholecystitis may include:

- Antibiotics (if your child's gallbladder is infected)
- Pain medicine to help control gallbladder pain
- IV (a small tube placed into the vein) fluids to keep your child from becoming dehydrated

Your child's symptoms are usually gone within 1–2 days. However, cholecystitis comes back often, so your child's healthcare provider may recommend surgery to remove the gallbladder. This is called a cholecystectomy (ko-leh-sis-TECT-oh-me).

A surgeon can usually remove your child's gallbladder through a minimally invasive surgery. They will make four small openings in your child's abdomen and insert a tiny video camera attached to a small tube. They will then use surgical tools to remove the gallbladder through one of the openings.

When your child no longer has a gallbladder, the bile flows from the liver to the small intestine instead of being stored in the gallbladder. Your child does not need their gallbladder for digestion.

How can I prevent cholecystitis?

Help your child avoid getting cholecystitis by:

- Having them eat a diet with lots of fruits, vegetables and fiber
- Helping them maintain (or achieve) a healthy weight
- Having them lose weight slowly (if they need to lose weight)

Call your child’s healthcare provider if your child:

- Pain in the upper right abdomen that moves to the right shoulder or back
- Nausea
- Fever
- Vomiting
- A tender abdomen when it is touched



Notes

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