

Diet and Gallstones

Allied Health Professional (AHPs)
Nutrition & Dietetics

Introduction

Dietary management of gallstones involves a healthy diet and keeping your weight within the healthy weight range.

If you have gallstones and experience pain on eating high fat foods your doctor may suggest that you follow a low-fat diet, however, it is important not to exclude fat completely as it provides essential vitamins.

What are gallstones?

Gallstones are small stones, usually made of cholesterol, that form in the gallbladder. Some of the risk factors for developing gallstones include obesity, pregnancy and in some cases rapid weight loss.

How long do I need to follow a low-fat diet for?

In most cases you will need to follow this diet as long as your symptoms persist. The diet is often required until surgery to remove the gall bladder (cholecystectomy).

Following a healthy balanced diet after your surgery is recommended to ensure your body will receive all the nutrients needed.

If you are experiencing chronic painful cholecystitis (irritation of the gallbladder) when eating fatty foods (persisting for a long period of time or recurring illness), it is recommended to follow a Mediterranean diet which has an anti-inflammatory property that may aid your symptoms.

The Mediterranean diet is a healthy diet that has plenty of fruit and vegetables (5 a day), wholegrain carbohydrates and fibre that will keep you full for longer to prevent snacking. See below for recommended foods.

It may also aid your symptoms like pain from gallbladder irritation.

Will I lose weight on a low-fat diet?

It is likely that you may lose weight by reducing the fat in your diet. If you are overweight this may be a welcome outcome. However, if you are underweight and concerned about losing weight, ask to be referred to a Dietitian for further advice.

How do I reduce my fat intake?

Below you will find some useful cooking tips to help reduce your fat intake.

The prevention of infection is a major priority in all healthcare and everyone has a part to play.

- Please decontaminate your hands frequently for 20 seconds using soap and water or alcohol gel if available
- If you have symptoms of diarrhoea and/or vomiting, cough or other respiratory symptoms, a temperature or any loss of taste or smell please do not visit the hospital or any other care facility and seek advice from 111
- Keep the environment clean and tidy
- Let's work together to keep infections out of our hospitals and care homes.

What cooking methods should I use?

Follow the tips below to reduce fat in the cooking process:

- Avoid frying foods or roasting foods in fat or oil
- Grill, poach, boil, microwave, steam, air fry or bake, for example baked fish
- Avoid adding margarine or butter to vegetables or potato
- Remove all visible fat on meat and skin on poultry before cooking
- Skim fat off stews, casseroles, sauces, mince, and curries whilst cooking
- Avoid using meat juices to make gravy

You may find the following list helpful to identify suitable low-fat foods:

Food	Avoid or reduce	Choose instead
Breakfast	Pastries for example, croissants, fry-ups including fried bacon, fried eggs, fried bread, fried sausages, black pudding.	Cereals, porridge with semi or skimmed milk, toast with reduced fat spread. Boiled / scrambled / poached eggs with baked beans and cooked tomato or mushrooms (occasional grilled-back bacon (remove visible white fat). Low fat yogurt, fish or fruit
Sweet Snacks, Biscuits & Cakes	Chocolate bars, fudge, toffee, chocolate or shortbread biscuits, cream cakes, chocolate cakes, rich fruit cakes, fruit pastries, doughnuts	Boiled sweets, fruit pastilles, marshmallows, liquorice, low fat biscuits for example, rich tea, ginger biscuits, garibaldi, or morning coffee biscuits, low fat cakes, scones (no cream), teacakes, crumpets, or meringues.
Desserts	Pies, crumbles, cream, ice cream, full fat yoghurts, cheesecake, crème brûlée.	Low fat yoghurts, jelly, fresh fruit, low fat ice creams, low fat desserts for example, low fat rice pudding or custard. Tinned fruit, sorbet.
Savoury snacks	Crisps, nuts and seeds, pork scratchings, sausage rolls and pasties, Bombay mix.	Low fat crisps, plain crackers, crisp bread, rice cakes, popcorn, pretzels, almonds
Meats and Fish	Fatty meat, processed meats such as sausages, kebabs, burgers or meat pies. Fish coated in batter.	Lean red meat, chicken or turkey, white fish such as cod, haddock or pollock.
Fats and Oils	Avoid frying and using large amounts of cooking oils.	Low fat spreads, plant-based spreads, spray oils, small amount of olive oil for dressing with your salad per day.

Take away	Curries, Chinese, pizza, kebabs, fried rice, fish & chips.	Homemade stir fry's, dry curries made with low fat yoghurt with steamed or boiled rice, homemade pizza (small portion low fat cheese). Air fried or baked white fish.
Soups	Cream based soups, for example, cream of mushroom.	Tomato based soup, low fat, and homemade soup.
Dairy Products	Full fat milk, cream, full fat yoghurt, full fat cheeses such as cheddar, full fat soft cheese, evaporated milk, condensed milk, highly processed dairy yoghurts with lots of additives and extra sugar compensating for less fat in product.	Semi or skimmed milk, low fat natural yoghurts, low fat crème fraiche, reduced fat cheeses or lower fat cheeses for example, cottage cheese, feta, and low-fat soft cheeses.
Salads, dressings, sauces, and gravy	Creamy dips, high fat hummus, avocado, mayonnaise, creamy or cheese sauces, gravy made from meat drippings.	Low fat salad dressings, salsa, tomato-based sauces, low fat hummus, light mayonnaise or salad creams, vinegar, balsamic vinegar, gravy made from gravy granules or stock cubes
Drinks	Full fat milkshakes, full fat hot chocolates, Irish coffee, full fat milk.	Low fat milk shakes, low calorie hot chocolates drinks, semi / skimmed milk drinks.
Fruit and vegetables	Fruit pies, fried vegetables	All fresh fruit and vegetables / salads All dried fruit & tinned fruit choices One fruit juice portion per day (Aim for 2 fruit portions and 3 or more vegetable portions per day). Increase your intake of legumes like chickpeas, lentils, beans, A portion of olives per day

How do I interpret labels on foods?

When looking at food labels you can compare the fat content of different varieties of the same product by looking at the amount of fat (total fat) per 100g. This will help you to choose food products with less fat.

When looking at food labels, the guidelines are:

- Low Fat = 3g or less per 100g
- High Fat = 20g or more per 100g

Nutritional Information

Servings per package: 1	Average quantity	
Serving size: 170g	Per serving	Per 100g
Energy	410kJ / 98kcal	240kJ / 57kcal
Protein	5.2g	3.1g
Fat - total	2.8g	1.7g
- saturated fat	0g	0g
Carbohydrate	11.5g	6.7g
- Sugars	3.5g	2.1g
Dietary fibre	2.2g	1.3g
Sodium	30mg	17mg

1.7g fat per
100g is low fat

Contact Details:

Please contact Nutrition and Dietetics at New Cross Hospital for further information. Tel: 01902 695335

08:30 – 17:00 Monday to Friday

English

If you need information in another way like easy read or a different language please let us know.

If you need an interpreter or assistance please let us know.

Lithuanian

Jeigu norėtumėte, kad informacija jums būtų pateikta kitu būdu, pavyzdžiui, supaprastinta forma ar kita kalba, prašome mums apie tai pranešti.

Jeigu jums reikia vertėjo ar kitos pagalbos, prašome mums apie tai pranešti.

Polish

Jeżeli chcieliby Państwo otrzymać te informacje w innej postaci, na przykład w wersji łatwej do czytania lub w innym języku, prosimy powiedzieć nam o tym.

Prosimy poinformować nas również, jeżeli potrzebowaliby Państwo usługi tłumaczenia ustnego lub innej pomocy.

Punjabi

ਜੇ ਤੁਹਾਨੂੰ ਇਹ ਜਾਣਕਾਰੀ ਕਿਸੇ ਹੋਰ ਰੂਪ ਵਿਚ, ਜਿਵੇਂ ਪੜ੍ਹਨ ਵਿਚ ਆਸਾਨ ਰੂਪ ਜਾਂ ਕਿਸੇ ਦੂਜੀ ਭਾਸ਼ਾ ਵਿਚ, ਚਾਹੀਦੀ ਹੈ ਤਾਂ ਕਿਰਪਾ ਕਰਕੇ ਸਾਨੂੰ ਦੱਸੋ।

ਜੇ ਤੁਹਾਨੂੰ ਦੁਆਰੀਏ ਦੀ ਜਾਂ ਸਹਾਇਤਾ ਦੀ ਲੋੜ ਹੈ ਤਾਂ ਕਿਰਪਾ ਕਰਕੇ ਸਾਨੂੰ ਦੱਸੋ।

Romanian

Dacă aveți nevoie de informații în alt format, ca de exemplu caractere ușor de citit sau altă limbă, vă rugăm să ne informați.

Dacă aveți nevoie de un interpret sau de asistență, vă rugăm să ne informați.

Traditional Chinese

如果您需要以其他方式了解信息，如易读或其他语种，请告诉我们。

如果您需要口译人员或帮助，请告诉我们。