

Patient information from BMJ

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Gallstones: questions to ask your doctor

If you've been told that you have gallstones or you are thinking about having gallbladder surgery you may want to ask your doctor these questions.

Questions about gallstones

If you've been told you have gallstones you may want to talk to your doctor to find out more. Here are some questions that you might want to ask.

- Are you sure that gallstones are causing my symptoms?
- What are the chances that my symptoms will get better without treatment?
- Are my gallstones causing any blockages or problems?
- What can I do to stop the attacks of pain I get in my abdomen?
- Is there anything I can do to help prevent having another attack?
- How will I know if I get problems from my gallstones?
- What should I do if that happens?

Questions about surgery

If you are thinking about having an operation to take out your gallbladder you should talk with your doctor and your surgeon to find out more. Here are some questions you might want to ask.

- Will taking out my gallbladder make my symptoms go away?
- Are there any alternatives to having my gallbladder removed?
- What kind of operation will I have?
- Where will I need to go for my surgery?
- How much experience with this type of surgery does my surgeon have? Has he or she done 50 or more of these types of operations?
- What are the chances that I will have problems during the operation?
- How long will I have to wait for the operation?
- How long will I need to stay in hospital?

Gallstones: questions to ask your doctor

- How much time will I need to take off work afterwards?
- While I'm waiting for surgery should I follow a special diet?
- Is there anything else I should do, or not do, while I'm waiting for surgery?
- What can I expect after having the operation? Are there any side effects?

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