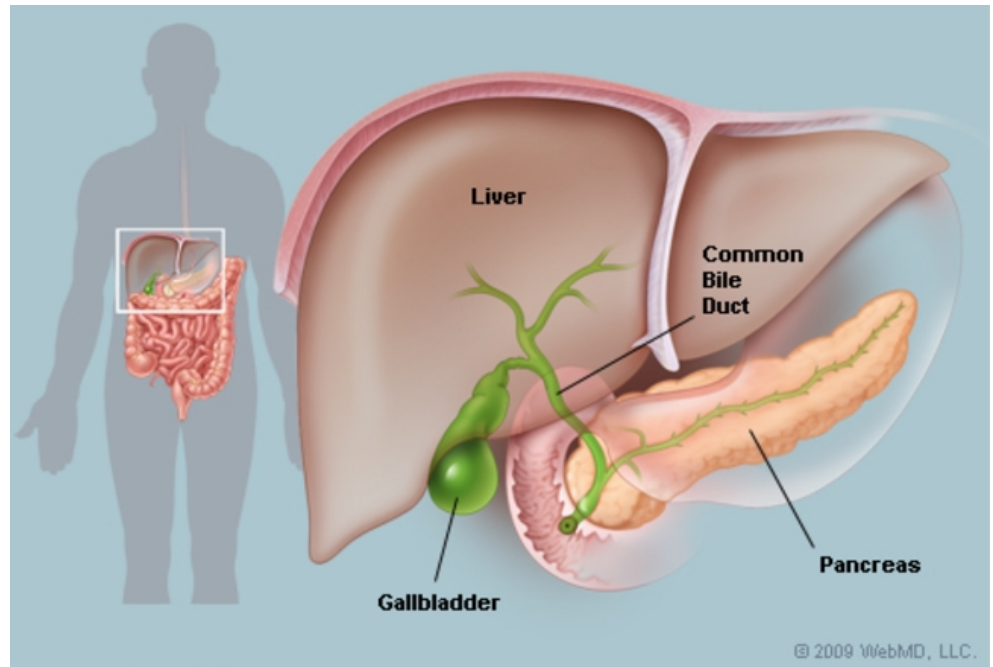


Got Gall? Learning about our Gall Bladder

The Gallbladder is a small holding sac that sits under/in the liver. In the picture to the right, the gallbladder is full as you can see it below the liver. When it is mostly empty it is flat and lies up under the liver.



The gallbladder stores bile that the liver makes. Bile is used for digesting hard to digest foods such as fats. Bile also helps escort toxins to out of our colon while it cleanses the villi and helps our body detoxify in general.

The bile is highly concentrated (15-20x) as it is transferred for storage to the gallbladder, allowing an extra potent dose of digestive bile to help clear the fats through our digestive system.

When a meal has small amounts of fats the liver is able to keep up with the demand of bile, however when we eat a high fat or high protein meal we need a larger more concentrated dose of bile from the gallbladder.

While most allopathic doctors are quick to say we can live fine without our gall bladder ... I tend to differ in opinion. Digestion is a cornerstone in our health — anything that interferes with digestion will interfere with our health. Without adequate bile eating an avocado would make you throw up.



We used to say the appendix was “useless” too, now we know it has a purpose.

Why is gallbladder disease / removal the most common operation today? This is a fairly new epidemic.

1. Excessive Stress ... stress shuts down our parasympathetic nervous system which literally shuts down all our digestive processes.
2. A history of sluggish bowel function.
3. Pesticides and environmental toxins that kill our gut microbes that help us digest foods and detoxify.
4. And really the #1 issue is diet and processed foods. All those bleached, refined, boiled, deodorized and highly processed oils like canola oil, corn oil, and other vegetable oils clog up the bile ducts with what has been termed bile sludge.

<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/2210650>

- 4.1. These oils lead to chronic inflammation of the liver and intestines which is related to causing all kinds of inflammation issues from IBS to arthritis.

Really the number one issue for gallbladder health is processed oils and grains - processed foods in general.

While you may think you don't eat many of these foods, more people eat more of them than they realize.

Do you eat at restaurants? The number one cooking still in use in most all restaurants— even those claiming to be healthy is canola oil!

Do you eat corn chips? Crackers? Potato chips? Fried foods? All very hard on the gallbladder.

Diabetes and depression are common symptoms of an inability to properly digest and use fats in your body.

If you can not digest the fats your body will just store them as body fat instead of burning them for energy.



Both our gut and brain need good digested fats from our diet to keep our neurotransmitters happy that are required for mood stability and blood sugar stability. Fat is a nutrient.

Feeling Melancholy?

Melancholy means “black bile”! In the archaic times black bile was indicative of a “black mood” or pensive sad thoughtfulness mood. Hence connecting our gut and bile to our mood! Which it took a couple hundred years for science to catch up with ! now that we have a better understanding of the gut brain axis.

Bile color can be an indication of the health of your bile. Healthy bile can vary from green to brown — however if you have black or tarry stools — or fats and/or mucus in your stool this is a sign you might want to pay attention to your bile. Start with the food recommendations below and even consult with a chinees or ayurvedic doctor on doing a liver and gallbladder cleanse.

Congested Gallbladders — the start of gallbladder issues

Processed foods and oils clog up the ducts the bile has to flow in, when the ducts become congested bile backs up into the liver and gallbladder — and the pancreas.

The pancreas shares the bile duct with the liver for delivering digestive enzymes into the small intestine — remember learning about that when we learned about digestion? The pancreas also then will have a hard time getting its digestive enzymes and buffers into the small intestine where they are needed for digestion. When you have the pancreas, liver and gallbladder all backed up due to bile sludge you will have major digestive issues!

Just removing the gallbladder as is done, will not solve this problem. It may reduce pain or your risk of your gallbladder rupturing — both are



medical concerns — you need to address digestive issues before the gallbladder gets so inflamed.

A friend of mine who had her gallbladder removed stated this “that darn little organ causes more issues NOT having it than having it!”.

Bile:

- ॐ Important for digestion of fats and even harder to digest foods such as seeds, nuts, and beans which have the plant protective anti-nutrients such as phytic acid and lectins.
- ॐ helps you go to the bathroom (bile combines with fiber to give your stools bulk and slide action ;)
- ॐ Neutralizes stomach acids so the stomach can empty food into the small intestines.
- ॐ Bile + fiber also escorts used cholesterol to the colon — if you don't have enough fiber your body can't get rid of the toxic cholesterol and it ends up going back to the liver when it congests the bile ducts and gallbladder.
- ॐ Also with fiber the bile cleans our digestive tract and the little villi that line it, keeping mucus and congestion out of your digestive tract.

Notice the importance of fiber here!

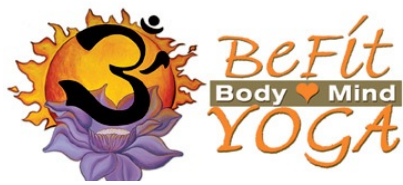
If you suspect bile sludge, now is the time to get the diet right before this progresses to a diagnosis. Diet and lifestyle can fix bile sludge. Also, I have information below on liver and gallbladder detoxes.

Modern medicine is only recently acknowledging bile sludge while alternative therapies have been talking about this for years.

Another factor that can lead to digestive related sluggish bile issues:

Stomach stuck under your diaphragm? Tender Tummy Test

The stomach is meant to hang, however in people who experience chronic stress or breathe shallow there is a tendency for the stomach to adhere to the underside of the diaphragm. Overtime if not



addressed, the stomach will eventually slip up through the hole to the esophagus causing an hiatal hernia

An easy test for this is to see if you have a tender tummy. Using your thumb or fingers press deeply up under the left side of your rib cage. Do you feel tenderness there? If so, might be time to see a chiropractor, ayurvedic or TCM doctor who are able to do stomach pulling. You can also do it yourself, I outlined it in the chapter on GERD and lifespa.com (Dr. John Douillard) explains how to do it yourself.

If your stomach is starting to adhere to the underside of your diaphragm you will start to have digestive issues and heartburn — popping a tums or PPI may temporarily reduce your pain but in the long run your digestion will only get worse and lead to the necessity of more medical interventions that are not fun.

Bile related low stomach acid Heartburn

And sluggish bile leads to heart burn. Bile also helps to buffer food and stomach acids (HCl) from the stomach to the small intestines. If there is not enough buffer, your stomach will simply not release the food — and eventually your body will dial down its production of stomach acids leaving your food to in your stomach for way too long which is the leading cause of heartburn.

Low Functioning Gallbladder or Biliary Dyskinesia

If your gallbladder is ejecting bile in a lower than normal amount, your doctor may order an invasive test to check for biliary dyskinesia. This test uses radio-active dye to follow the path of the bile from the liver to the gallbladder and from the gallbladder to the intestines. The normal ejection fraction is 33-42%.

Symptoms of Biliary Dyskinesia?

- ॐ Gallbladder attack in the absence of gall stones.
- ॐ Pain and tenderness in your right upper abdomen after eating



ॐ Gas, bloating, burping, nausea, vomiting, fat intolerance

Causes of a low functioning gallbladder?

- ॐ Chronic ongoing inflammation which causes a thickening of the gallbladder wall
- ॐ stress
- ॐ hypothyroidism
- ॐ Food sensitivities

Natural support for Biliary Dyskinesia

- ॐ check thyroid function
- ॐ reduce stress and use herbal relaxants
- ॐ coffee enemas ... they stimulate the vagus nerve and help the liver detox.
- ॐ coffee ... 1-2 cups daily, coffee can increase the contraction strength of the gallbladder
- ॐ Turmeric :) also increase the strength of the gallbladder contractions.
- ॐ Apples and apple cider vinegar help to thin bile.

And on the other side, your gallbladder could be hyper-functioning and you could have **Biliary Hyperkinesia**. Currently there are not many options outside of having your gallbladder removed. Herbalists would start to relax the gallbladder with herbs such as cramp bark, castor oil packs, stress support, herbal relaxants, B vitamins, and adaptogenic herbs.

Gallstones

Gallstones can be related to diet, which is as far as I want to address gallstones in this scope. Tips to eat foods that are healthy for the gallbladder along with foods to avoid can go a long way in treating and getting rid of gallstones. Btw, Gallstones are more prevalent in women while kidney stones tend to be more prevalent in men.

Liver & Gallbladder Health Proactively



Common in TCM and Ayurveda are liver and gallbladder flushes. These can correct bile related issues and clear up symptoms like foggy thinking, pain, bloating, and digestive issues.

This is not an easy cleanse — it requires about 5-7 days prior of eating certain foods that help thin your bile and make sure you are going to the bathroom regularly before you attempt the cleanse. This cleanse is a little different than the gentle at home cleanse detoxes we have done together and needs to be done with the guidance of an ayurvedic or TCM doctor (I know one in Maui if you want to do a liver cleanse there!).

ॐ Dr. John Douillard at lifespa.com has a guide on performing a [liver & gallbladder cleanse](#).

Who are your bile's friends?

- ॐ Apples! and Apple Cider Vinegar. The malic acid in apples and acv thins bile and dilates the bile ducts allowing for better passage of the bile into the small intestine.
- ॐ Digestive bitters help to stimulate not only bile but also the production of stomach acids and pancreatic enzymes all used for digestion.
- ॐ Dandelion leaf or root tea
- ॐ Bitter herbs — bitter herbs not only help with digestion, they also help with detoxifying. Bitter herbs are anti-microbial and can also help treat infections. Examples: yarrow, goldenseal, milk thistle, wild yam, and turmeric.

A word on TEA! Teabags are not good tea. Firstly they are made with the lowest grade of herbs, secondly they are too weak to offer much medicinal support. You want to get organic whole dried herbs for use as teas — and even grow and dry your own. It's very easy.

- ॐ Digestive teas — are safer than bitters and you can brew them quite strong if you need an herbal “medicine” tea. For example chamomile, when steeped lightly and a small amount — about 1



tsp— chamomile is sweet and cooling, anti-inflammatory. Steep 1/2 cup of chamomile flowers in two cups of hot boiled water for 10-15 minutes and you have a potent bitter digestive tea — and this is great for supporting your bile.

- o Another strong digestive tea: 1 tablespoon each of chamomile flowers, peppermint leaves, fennel seeds, cardamom seeds and chopped fresh ginger. Put it in a French press, or a tea pot and pour 2 cups hot water over it. Let it steep for 15 minutes, press it out or strain it, take 1/2 cup 2–4x/day.
 - o Cumin, Coriander, and Fennel — affectionately known as CCF tea, I use a little more coriander seeds, and a little less cumin seeds in the blend. Pour boiling water over and steep 10-15 minutes for a nice digestive tea. I offer this to guests frequently. You could also make a carminative belly oil with these same oils (see below).
 - o You could also diffuse cumin, coriander, and fennel. I like 3 drops cumin, 7 drops coriander, and 5 drops fennel in my diffuser.
 - o A single tea of ginger, tulsi, peppermint, lemon balm, or chamomile — or you can combine any of those.
- ॐ Digestive Belly Blend - A few essential oils in a carrier oils and massaged around the abdomen can also support digestion.
- o Mix 4 drops of sweet basil and 7-8 drops of your favorite citrus (ex. lemon essential oil) into one ounce of carrier oil. Massage about a nickel or dime sized amount into your abdomen going up the right side of your abdomen and down the left following the flow of digestion.
 - o You could also make an essential oil blend with cumin, coriander, and fennel in a carrier oil
 - o I also have available for purchase two different digestive blends in 2 oz bottles. One blend is more for stress and has a mixture of digestive spices and cooling herbs help to relax the stress response so digestion can occur. The second blend is a warming blend that is more stimulating of



the digestive enzymes and acids you have learned about.
Contact me if you are interested in ordering either of these.

Peppermint tea and heartburn — While peppermint is famous in herbal medicine for reducing heartburn and improving digestion ... some people get heartburn from peppermint, this is due to the effect of peppermint relaxing the esophageal sphincter. It's worth a try to see how you feel on it.

More often than not it was ingestion of peppermint essential oil that caused the problems — not so much the tea. Do NOT take essential oils internally.

This is a helpful website I came across while researching gallbladder health: <https://www.gallbladderattack.com>

Gallbladder Health - Foods to Avoid

- ॐ Cooked and refined vegetable oils
- ॐ Excess saturated fats
- ॐ Fried foods
- ॐ High-fat meats like pork (Limit animal protein to 10% of diet)
- ॐ Hydrogenated oils
- ॐ Refined sugars

Foods to Increase:

- ॐ Apples
- ॐ Artichoke
- ॐ Avocado
- ॐ Beets
- ॐ Berries
- ॐ Black radish
- ॐ Celery
- ॐ Chicory
- ॐ Cranberries
- ॐ Dandelion
- ॐ Garlic



- ॐ Ginger
- ॐ Hibiscus
- ॐ Leafy greens
- ॐ Lemon
- ॐ Mustard Greens
- ॐ Olive oil
- ॐ Peppermint
- ॐ Turnip greens

Recipes for Gallbladder Health

Beet Tonic Recipe

- 1 Fresh beet, peeled and grated
- Juice of 1/2 lemon
- 2 Tbsp. flax oil

Combine all ingredients. Eat 1 beet's worth of this salad daily for 2-4 weeks.

Flaxseed Tea

1. Mix 1 Tbsp. whole flaxseeds into 2 1/2 cups water.
 2. Bring to a boil, and simmer for one hour.
 3. Use a strainer to separate the seeds from the liquid.
- Drink 1 cup each day on an empty stomach.

Green Smoothies

Apple a Day

Consume at least one apple a day after meals to increase bile flow. Apples have high amounts of malic acid which help to open up and dilate the bile ducts.

On the Emotional Level



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Feeling melancholy? This might be a sign you need to clean up your bile to help clean up your mood. Thanks to the vagus nerve, what is happening in our gut is reflected in our mood.

Are you harboring any bitterness? Or having hard thoughts about someone? Something hard to digest in your life? Feel like something is being taken from you?

These are emotions connected to the gallbladder. Identifying our emotions and the roots of them, then learning to release the person or event that is upsetting us is a big step toward releasing tension that could constrict gallbladder function.