Gallbladder flush and gallstone treatment – alternatives to gallbladder surgery; problems with gallbladder removed

"Gallstones, a national health problem" – the American Liver Foundation

Gallbladder problems

Gallbladder operation is the most common operation in North America. Every year, more than half a million people in the United States and more than 50,000 people in Canada undergo surgery to remove their gallbladders because of gallstones. Approximately 80% of all gallstones show no symptoms and may remain "silent" for years. Once symptoms arise, they persist and increase in frequency. The most common triggers for gallbladder attacks are caffeine, chocolate, eggs, dairy products (especially ice cream) and greasy or deep fried foods. Symptoms may include right upper quadrant abdominal discomfort or sharp pain, gas or fullness after a heavy meal. The pain can also spread to the chest, shoulder, neck or back. In addition to these symptoms, stones expelled from the gallbladder during contraction may become lodged within the bile duct leading to infection of the bile duct or gallbladder.

Different approaches to gallbladder problems in conventional medicine all carry unwanted risks. The most common treatment, surgery, has as many as 10% of patients coming out of surgery with stones remaining in the bile ducts according to the U.S. National Institute of Health. Bile duct injury is another risk. According to the Society of American Gastrointestinal Endoscopic Surgeons, "complications of Laparoscopic Cholecystectomy are infrequent, but include bleeding, infection, pneumonia, blood clots, or heart problems. Unintended injury to an adjacent structure such as the common bile duct or duodenum may occur and may require another surgical procedure to repair it. Bile leakage into the abdomen from the tubular channels leading from the liver to the intestine has been described."

The other treatment in conventional medicine is gallstone dissolution by different drugs such as chenodeoxycholic acid (Chenix), ursodeoxycholic acid (Actigall), methyl tert-butyl ether (MTBE), and ethyl propionate. These drugs only work on smaller cholesterol stones and may cause diarrhea, hepatic injury and increase in plasma cholesterol level, nausea, pain or fever [References 2 and 3 at the end of this section]. MTBE administration (intragastric instillation) is an invasive procedure. [see References 1,2,3 at the end of this section].

Alternative to gallbladder surgery

An alternative to surgery and gallstone removal by chemical dissolution is gallbladder flush. Traditional European folk remedy recommends the use of olive oil and lemon juice to flush the gallstones. A major concern is that if the stones are too big, they may not easily come out or may even get stuck on the way out. Traditional Chinese medicine recommends the use of "Gold Coin Grass (GCG)" (botanical name: *Herba Lysimachiae*, Chinese sound translation: *Chin-chien Tsao*) to crush and soften the stones so that they will come out slowly. This tends to take a relatively long time. However, centuries of experience has shown that Gold Coin Grass (GCG) can be taken safely without side effects. In most cases, alleviation of gallbladder pain is experienced within a few days of using Gold Coin Grass (GCG) in tincture form. This is a significant benefit. I have found from my own experience and that of many of my clients that a combination of the following steps to be the most effective and efficient.

Gallbladder cleansing and flushing procedures

**Step 1:** Use "Gold Coin Grass (GCG)" to crush and soften the gallstones.

"Gold Coin Grass (GCG)" in tincture form, using alcohol as a carrier, has been found to be more
effective than tablet or tea form, presumably because alcohol as a solvent facilitates the assimilation of the herbs. It is recommended that one to two 250 ml bottles of Gold Coin Grass (GCG) tincture be used before attempting gallbladder flushing described below. One tablespoonful is taken every day; therefore each bottle should take 2 to 3 weeks to finish. Two bottles of Gold Coin Grass (GCG) may be necessary for individuals over the age of 50 or who have gallbladder problems for a long time. For some people who are ex-heavy drinkers, a burning sensation may sometimes be experienced when using Gold Coin Grass (GCG) tincture but this does not seem to affect the efficacy of the herb.

Because the amount of alcohol contained in a tablespoonful is very small, this should not present a problem even for ex-drinkers. Having problems sleeping or constipation is usually a sign of liver congestion. Coptis which stimulates bile flow and Curcuma which increases energy flow in the liver and gallbladder are recommended to be taken in conjunction with GCG to increase the efficiency of flushing. Alternatively, if gallbladder-related pain is not a concern, Chinese Bitters may be taken prior to GCG in order to decongest the liver.

Step 2: Intestinal Cleansing

a) Soak 1 teaspoon to 1 tablespoon of Bentonite clay in 1 cup of filtered water for 12 hours. Start soaking in the morning.

b) Then add ½ to 1 tablespoon of psyllium husks or plantago seeds to the clay mixture and mix well.

c) Drink and eat the whole cup of mixture immediately and then followed by 1 cup of warm water before bedtime.

d) Drink at least 8 cups of warm water a day including 2 cups first thing in the morning.

e) Repeat the procedure until the stool becomes normal (usually 1 to 2 weeks), when no more intestinal cloggings are coming out.

Please note that intestinal cleansing is not necessary if you have never had constipation problems.

Step 3: Gallbladder Flush

The following procedure is based on: "Natural Liver Therapy" by Christopher Hobbs, L. Ac., Botanica Press, Capitola, CA (1993).

a) Eat only whole foods (un-refined foods) without fat for a whole day.

b) About an hour before bedtime (on an empty stomach), drink ¼-cup of extra virgin cold pressed olive oil mixed with ¼-cup of freshly squeezed lemon juice. Repeat this process every 15 minutes until a total of 1 cup each of olive oil and lemon juice is finished. An alternative to this procedure is to replace lemon juice with freshly-squeezed grapefruit juice. ½ cup of grapefruit juice can be used each time. A total of 1½ to 2 cups of grapefruit juice is required. It works well and tastes better than lemon juice.

c) Go to bed immediately and lie on your right side.

d) The next morning take 1 litre (approximately 4 cups) of warm distilled or filtered water containing two level teaspoons of un-iodized sea salt. Alternatively the addition of juice from half a lemon may be used in place of the sea salt.

e) Eat only softly cooked vegetables and broth the second day. The gallstones should come out
some time during the second day.

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The stones that come out are usually dark green or black in color. They may also be brown, off-white, green or, rarely, red in color. Stones crushed by *Gold Coin Grass (GCG)* may come out in any shape including flat pieces or sand.

**Step 3a: Liver Cleanse and Gallbladder Flush (Alternative Procedure)**

An alternative procedure to Step 3 above combines gallbladder flush with liver flush. It uses apple juice fasting, as described below (based on "Herbally Yours", by Penny C. Royal, Sound Nutrition, Utah, 1982). I would like to caution that people with cancer, candida yeast infection, diabetes, hypoglycemia or stomach ulcer should not use this apple juice fasting procedure because of the high sugar content in the apple juice.

**Day 1:**
Take 2 cups of 8 oz organic apple juice or apple cider every 2 hours from 8 am to 8 pm. Altogether 14 cups will have been taken during this period. Do not take any other food or drinks except plain water. Please note that the apple juice should not be taken cold from the refrigerator. It should be kept at room temperature or mixed with about 10% hot water before use because cold drinks chill the liver. For people with lots of stagnant bile, the collapsed stagnant bile may rush out after drinking apple juice. It may feel like having diarrhea but is actually stagnant bile (brownish yellow colour).

**Day 2:**
Repeat Day 1
At 8:30 pm, take ½-cup (4 oz) of olive oil (extra virgin cold pressed) mixed with ½-cup of lemon juice (squeezed from 3 lemons) or with ¾-cup of freshly-squeezed grapefruit juice. Go immediately to bed and sleep on your right side. If there is a large amount of stones, nausea may be felt after drinking olive oil but this feeling will largely disappear on the third day after taking some food.

**Day 3:**
Upon rising in the morning, take 1 litre (approximately 4 cups) of warm distilled or filtered water containing two level teaspoons of un-iodized sea salt. Alternatively the addition of juice from half a lemon may be used in place of the sea salt. Wait for at least half an hour before eating. Take vegetable broth and softly cooked vegetables only. The stones should be passed in the stool any time between midnight of Day 2 and morning of Day 4.

**Note:** The purpose of drinking apple juice is mainly for the malic acid in apple juice. Malic acid is a good solvent for stagnant bile in the liver. Apple juice taken during fasting would dissolve and push out stagnant bile in the liver. For someone with a yeast infection or diabetes, apple juice can be replaced by malic acid in capsule or powder form. The fasting procedure is the same except that apple juice is replaced by 1000 - 2000 mg of malic acid taken with 2 cups of warm water.

**Optional Extra Step**
The following additional step is optional, and can be used with Step 3 or Step 3a. You may want to try it yourself and see if it changes your results.

Some time ago, I was contacted by a customer who informed me that he had done 2 previous gallbladder flushes without success. He decided to try something new for his third flush attempt, so he used the liver/gallbladder flush 4-pack of Chinese Bitters, GCG, Curcuma, and Coptis according to instructions. Roughly one hour before taking his olive oil and lemon juice, he noticed that he had some left in each bottle, so he took a dose of all of them together on an empty stomach. In his words,
the results were "fantastic".
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This experience has since helped many others achieve a more efficient flush, including myself. My understanding is that the combination of Chinese Bitters, GCG, Coptis, and Curcuma all taken shortly before the olive oil and lemon juice helps the gallbladder contract more efficiently, which helps push out old stones in the back of the gallbladder.

I did my first 4 flushes (roughly 1 to 1½ months apart) in 1990. In my fourth flush, almost no more stones came out and I felt great, so I assumed that I had cleansed all of the stones from my gallbladder. Since then, I have been doing maintenance flushes once or twice a year, and in each flush, I usually release roughly 10 small stones. I had always assumed that these were newly formed stones, but in my last flush, I tried this additional step and took ½ tablespoon each of GCG and Curcuma, and 1 teaspoon each of Chinese Bitters and Coptis. I was surprised to pass two of the largest stones that I have ever seen, along with some small stones.

I believe that the large stones were very old stones in the very back of my gallbladder, and had been there all these years when I thought there were no large stones left. All of my previous flushes had failed to push them out, but this time, taking this simple extra step, I was able to move them out.

Guide to using flushing procedures

When gallstones exist, the gallbladder cannot contract efficiently. Therefore only stones in the front area of the gallbladder can be pushed out in the first flush. Then stones from the back area would slowly move forward and may cause problems again. The whole process should be repeated, including the use of GCG prior to the flush. It usually takes at least 3-4 flushes to clean out all the stones. Basically the flush should be repeated until hardly any stone comes out even though you have a good flush. The weaker your gallbladder is in contraction, the more flushes you will need in order to push out all of your stones.

A good flush means that all the loose stones are out. You feel good for at least a few days. The remaining stones are packed ones. They should be allowed some time to loosen up and get ready to come out. The interval between good flushes should be 1-2 months. Repeating the flush too soon after a good flush may waste your effort because the packed stones are not ready to come out yet. However, you can repeat the flush any time if you have an incomplete flush which means that loose stones are still somewhere and you never felt comfortable after the flush.

Once stones have been formed, the gallbladder tends to be sluggish. New stones may be formed again. Therefore 1 to 2 flushes a year is recommended for maintenance. Gold Coin Grass (GCG) may not be needed any more because new stones should be small and pass easily. I have been doing maintenance for years; usually around 10 to 15 small stones come out each time I do it. Chinese Bitters is the only product that I take now for maintenance, in addition to 1-2 flushes a year. I take these preventive measures because I am naturally prone to liver congestion.

There may be a need to De-congest the Liver

If the gallbladder is loaded with stones, there is very limited space in the gallbladder to store the bile. The bile, which is produced in the liver, stays in the liver and leads to liver congestion. When the liver is very congested, nutrients or herbs, which have to go through the liver first, may not reach the gallbladder. This explains why some people with very congested liver cannot flush out their stones unless they decongest their liver first. Another problem is that bile produced in the liver, through olive oil stimulation, has to flow down to the gallbladder in order to push out stones with the help of gallbladder contraction by lemon or grapefruit juice. If the liver is congested, bile flow is restricted. As
One of our products, *Chinese Bitters*, has been found to be very effective in decongesting the liver. It is possible to take *Chinese Bitters* in conjunction with *Gold Coin Grass* (GCG) and some people do this in order to more quickly prepare for a liver/gallbladder flush. However, the added load of taking both tinctures at once may be too much strain for the liver and gallbladder in some people, particularly those who suffer from weak livers or gallbladders. If this is the case for you, then you should start with *Chinese Bitters* first. After a few weeks of liver decongestion, you can switch from *Chinese Bitters* in the morning to *Gold Coin Grass*.

When the *Gold Coin Grass* is finished, *Chinese Bitters* may be taken again for a few days before the flush. During the flush, *Chinese Bitters* can still be taken to ensure that the liver is not congested.

**The use of Epsom Salt**

If the gallstones are so packed that they have difficulty moving, epsom salt, which dilates the bile duct, may be helpful. This usually happens to someone who is doing the first flush. Nothing may come out at all. In this situation, you may have to repeat the olive oil/lemon juice procedure and eat one more day of vegetables. However, epsom salt solution, prepared by dissolving 3 teaspoons of epsom salt (magnesium sulfate) in 1 cup of warm water, should be taken about one-and-a-half to two hours before repeating the olive oil and lemon juice procedure.

**If a stone gets stuck on its way out or if you have a gallbladder attack**

It does happen, although very rarely, that a stone may get stuck on its way out. In this situation, the olive oil/lemon juice flush may be repeated. Three teaspoonfuls of epsom salt in a cup of warm water should be taken 2 hours before the olive oil/lemon juice to dilate the duct. An alternative is 1 tablespoonful each of *Coptis* and *Curcuma* taken together. This combination helps to move the stone by stimulating bile flow (*Coptis*) and increasing energy flow (*Curcuma*). It also helps to relieve pain from gallbladder attack in most cases. Furthermore, if no stone comes out during the flush the day after taking olive oil/lemon juice and you feel uncomfortable, one tablespoon each of *Coptis* and *Curcuma* can usually help to push out the stones or other blockages.

If one tablespoon each of Coptis and Curcuma fail to push out the lodged stone and relieve pain, it is usually due to stone too big to be pushed out. In this situation, some people have found the following procedure to be helpful: take 2 tablespoons of GCG to crush the stone and wait for 1½ to 2 hours before taking 1 tablespoon each of Coptis and Curcuma again. The crushed stones appear to move easier and the pain is relieved.

A stuck stone during the flush is different from a regular gallbladder attack. During the flush, a lot of bile is produced which serves as an excellent lubricant. The pain produced is relatively dull and mild in comparison with the very sharp pain experienced in a regular gallbladder attack.

**User Experience**

I never thought I had gallstones before I did my first liver and gallbladder flush. Other than constipation and watery stools in the past, I had no pain or any other symptoms. In my first flush, some of the stones that came out were about the size of a peanut. I took *Gold Coin Grass* (GCG) before my second flush a few months later. The stones all came out in pieces and were soft.

A 53-year old woman used a patented Chinese medicine in tablet form called "Lidan" (also contains *Gold Coin Grass* (GCG) as the main ingredient) for 3 years. It did relieve her shoulder pain and
reduce her gallbladder pain from constant pain to a few attacks a day. When she started using Gold

Coin Grass (GCG) in tincture form, her pain was reduced to only one attack every few days within two
weeks of using the Gold Coin Grass (GCG) tincture. After finishing one 250 ml bottle of the tincture,
she did liver and gallbladder flushing (described above), her pain disappeared completely.

A 68-year-old man had shoulder pain and was treated as arthritis with anti-inflammatory drugs for 6
years. He had a severe gallbladder attack one day. Ultrasound showed that he had 3 gallstones. He
decided to do gallbladder flush instead of surgery. About 20 stones were released the first time he did
the gallbladder flush program which required epsom salt. After the flush, ultrasound showed that he
still had 2 stones. Obviously the other 19 stones that came out were missed in the first ultrasound
(small stones are missed easily in ultrasound) and the 2 stones that remained were too big to come
out. He had another minor gallbladder attack after the first flush. In his second attempt, he took Gold
Coin Grass (GCG) to crush his stones and Curcuma for increasing energy flow in the liver before
flushing using the apple juice program (see Step 3a above). Close to a hundred stones came out. He
repeated the Gold Coin Grass (GCG) and apple juice program 3 months later. It was after the third
flush that all his symptoms including shoulder and neck pain disappeared completely.

A lady in her late 60’s had gallbladder problem since her 20’s. Early in 1998 she had a severe
gallbladder attack. She refused gallbladder operation and tried two bottles of Gold Coin Grass (GCG)
before her first liver and gallbladder flush (using Step 3a above). For unknown reasons nothing came
out. Being determined to flush out her stones naturally, she tried again two weeks later to flush
without taking any more Gold Coin Grass (GCG). Large amounts of stones came out this time.
Altogether she flushed 4 times within a half year period and she said she had never felt so energetic
before. This experience shows that in some cases where the stones are tightly packed it may take
more than one flushing to start getting them out.

A 55-year-old man had shoulder pain for 6 years because of a car accident. He had pain in his
gallbladder area after each meal. I told him that he had gallstones and his shoulder pain was probably
related to gallstones because the shoulder and neck are all part of the gallbladder meridian. His
shoulder and neck pain was reduced about 30% just by taking Gold Coin Grass (GCG) and Curcuma.
After his first liver and gallbladder flush, his pain was 90% gone. What really happened was that he
already had gallstones which caused poor blood circulation in his shoulder and neck area when he
had the accident. When blood circulation is sluggish, it tends to become stagnant and leads to pain.
The car accident just triggered the blood stagnation. When his gallbladder was healthier, the blood
circulation in his neck and shoulder improved and his pain was reduced.

For some individuals who cannot take olive oil or lemon juice, taking Gold Coin Grass (GCG) tincture
for up to one year may be the slow but safe way of gallstone removal.

Control of Diet

The gallbladder is connected to the spleen by nerves and is also closely connected to the liver.
Anyone with gallbladder problems or with gallbladder removed should avoid or minimize foods that
weaken the liver or spleen such as white flour, white sugar, caffeine, chocolate and deep fried foods.
According to Chinese medicine, cold foods, cold drinks, citrus fruits (unless you also eat the outer
skin, which is not advised unless the fruit was organically grown because pesticides often sink into the
outer skin), tomato, banana and even salad should also be avoided or minimized because they
weaken the spleen and kidneys.

If you already had gallbladder surgery
The gallbladder stores, concentrates and secretes bile which is produced in the liver. The bile is necessary in the intestine for the digestion and absorption of fat. It is also important for lubricating the intestinal wall. Once the gallbladder is removed, the bile lost its storage space and tends to accumulate in the liver. The result is reduced bile flow because the liver does not contract to squirt the bile into the intestine like the gallbladder does. The reduced bile flow usually causes indigestion, constipation or diarrhea. When the accumulated bile becomes congested in the liver, it weakens the liver functions and may even lead to depression. According to Chinese medicine, depression is a sign of blocked liver energy. The combined effects of liver congestion and intestinal sluggishness may also cause sleep disorder, insomnia, or bad breath. Furthermore, the reduced bile flow could weaken the spleen and pancreas so much that diabetes may result. The spleen is connected to the gallbladder by nerves. When the gallbladder is removed, the spleen is out of balance and becomes weakened. According to Chinese medicine, the spleen provides energy to the heart. A weak spleen therefore results in a weak heart. Indeed, the statistics do show that heart attacks are more common among people without gallbladders.

Auto-immune diseases and allergies may also be the result of gallbladder removal because they are often caused by weak liver and spleen. Other health problems that may be experienced after gallbladder removal include itchy skin, arthritis or anemia. Allergy and arthritis are associated with weak liver and spleen. Itchy skin is usually caused by weak spleen if rashes (inflammation) are involved. If there are no rashes, it may be caused by bilirubin (one of the major components in bile) crystalizing under the skin. When excessive bilirubin is in the blood due to excessive bile carried to blood circulation from the liver, bilirubin may crystalize because it has low solubility in blood. Excessive bile in blood is usually the result of stagnant bile flow caused by liver congestion or some kind of blockage.

Our red cells live about 100-120 days. The worn out cells are destroyed by the spleen or liver. When the spleen and liver are healthy, the broken down products would be recycled to produce new red cells. Weak liver and weak spleen that have poor capability of recycling these broken down products may lead to anemia.

When the liver is badly congested with stagnant bile which quite often happens to people with their gallbladder removed, the only relief is to stimulate their bile flow. From our experience working with many people who had gallbladder surgery, a combination of taking Chinese Bitters in the morning (to cleanse the liver) and Coptis at night (to stimulate bile flow) will help to relieve symptoms related to gallbladder removal, such as sleep problems and difficulty with bowel movement.

A helpful regimen in the morning is to start with 2 cups of warm water, then do your exercises. You can take Chinese Bitters ¾-1 hour later when the water has emptied out of the stomach. Another ½-hour later, you can have your breakfast. The warm water helps to "activate" the intestines & kidneys.

It is not uncommon for people who have their gallbladder removed to have gallstones in their liver. When the bile that is produced in the liver cannot be stored in the gallbladder anymore, it tends to get congested and become stagnant in the liver. When the bile is stagnant in the liver for too long, it becomes too concentrated; then cholesterol and bile pigments may crystalize to form stones in the liver similar to what happens in the gallbladder.

A 68-year old man had his gallbladder removed about one year before he came to see me. I recommended that he should flush his liver by the following procedure. First he should take our Chinese Bitters in the morning and Coptis at night. When these are finished, he should follow up by taking GCG in the morning and Curcuma at night. When he did his first liver flush (Step 3a above)
after he finished the GCG and Curcuma, he was surprised to find that he flushed out more than a hundred small stones. He told me that he felt at least 10 years younger.

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Summary

Gallstones are a national health issue which cannot be solved by simply removing peoples' gallbladders the moment they develop problems. However, the Chinese herb known as Gold Coin Grass can help alleviate these problems, and liver and gallbladder flushing can be used to clean out stones and restore your liver and gallbladder health.

The 4 herbal tinctures used to prepare for a liver/gallbladder flush are Chinese Bitters, GCG, Coptis, and Curcuma. For people who still sleep well and have normal, regular bowel movements (not loose or hard), Coptis and Curcuma are not necessary for preparation, but can still be useful if problems arise during the flush (such as a stone which gets stuck in the ducts on the way out or more rarely, a gallbladder attack).

References:

http://www.sensiblehealth.com/gallbladder.html