Gall Stones
By Thomas Cowan, M.D. – July 1, 2003

Question: I am a 40-year-old woman who has just been told by my physician that I have gall bladder stones, that my gall bladder is diseased and that it needs to come out. Is there a natural approach to healing this problem?

Answer: Establishment medical thinking says that if you have stones in your gall bladder, it is diseased and needs to come out. But do gall stones mean that the gall bladder is diseased?

The gall bladder is a reservoir or holding tank for bile salts, which the body uses to digest fats. When we eat fat, the body releases bile into the digestive tract to break it down into absorbable fatty acids.

Bile salts are made of cholesterol. Gall stones are a sign that your body has "decided" to increase its reservoir of cholesterol. Why would it do this? The obvious answer is that it has become "afraid" that the supply of cholesterol is low, therefore it uses the strategy of storing extra for a "rainy day".

Actually, it's quite a clever and innovative strategy. Your gall bladder is not diseased, it doesn't need to come out. In fact, we know that taking your gall bladder out will increase your risk of cancer. As in war, doing violence to an innocent (or in this case, helpful) organ leads only to even greater suffering (cancer, or more "terrorism"). The reason that removing the gall bladder leads to cancer has been the subject of study and research for over 40 years. The best guess is that when you remove the reservoir for the bile acids they get secreted into the intestines in an "inappropriate " fashion. "Inappropriate" could mean not in its usual rhythm, or in an altered form. The excess cancer risk is seen in the right side of the colon, exactly where these bile salts enter and "irritate" the colon.

Over the years, I have become convinced that most of what we call disease is actually the body's adaptive strategy to less-than-optimal circumstances. Modern medicine gets rid of this adaptive strategy without fixing the underlying cause, leading to side effects that are worse than the original disease.

So what should you do? First, do not believe that your gall bladder is diseased! Second, give your body what it needs, in this case more cholesterol. Once your body is convinced that you are serious and will provide it with a steady stream of cholesterol, which it desperately needs to stay alive, it will give up the flawed strategy of storing extra, the stones will dissolve and you will be well again. I know of two people who adopted this strategy, and within a year their stones completely dissolved. Actually, you might want to thank your gall bladder for devising such an innovative strategy for keeping you alive until you learned how to eat in a way that provides your body with the materials it needs to be healthy.
The best way to provide your gall bladder with cholesterol is to eat plenty of animal fats. If you eat a lot of vegetable oils and trans fats, the gall bladder is likely to become inflamed. If you are on a low-fat diet, the gall bladder atrophies because it does not have enough work to do.

What about a diet for those who have had their gall bladder removed? The conventional advice is to go on an extreme, low-fat diet. But your body still needs good fats, and still produces bile to digest them. Even without your gall bladder, you should still eat healthy animal fats and avoid processed vegetable oils.

The gall bladder is a rhythmical organ and secretes bile at certain times of the day – ideally at meal times. When you have a gall bladder, you always have bile salts stored and so do not necessarily have to eat at set times of the day. For those who have had their gall bladder removed, it is important to eat meals in a rhythmical fashion – three meals per day at approximately the same time each day, and with no snacks in between. In order to enhance the sense of rhythm and supplement the supply of bile, I prescribe Cholacol, the Standard Process bile salts formulation, 1 tablet with each meal. Swedish bitters, 1/2 teaspoon mixed with a little water, taken just before each meal may also be helpful.

In order to provide ample protection for your colon, be sure to take cod liver oil and other foods rich in vitamin D. Avoid all processed and grilled meats and any foods containing carcinogenic substances that could supplement the irritating properties of bile secreted into the intestines.

This article appeared in Wise Traditions in Food, Farming and the Healing Arts, the quarterly magazine of the Weston A. Price Foundation, Spring 2003.

About the Author

Thomas Cowan, MD, discovered the work of the two men who would have the most influence on his career while teaching gardening as a Peace Corps volunteer in Swaziland, South Africa. He read *Nutrition and Physical Degeneration* by Weston Price and a fellow volunteer explained the arcane principles of Rudolf Steiner’s biodynamic agriculture. These events inspired him to pursue a medical degree. Cowan graduated from Michigan State University College of Human Medicine in 1984. After his residency in Family Practice at Johnson City Hospital in Johnson City, New York, he set up an anthroposophical medical practice in Peterborough, New Hampshire. Dr. Cowan has served as vice president of the Physicians Association for Anthroposophical Medicine and is a founding board member of the Weston A. Price Foundation.

http://www.westonaprice.org/Gall-Stones.html