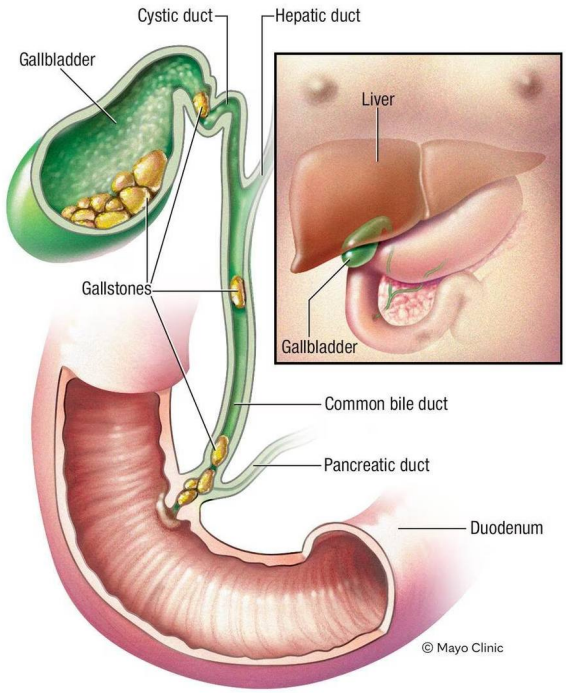
Prof. Mohammad Abu Hilal
MD, PhD, FRCS, FACS, DocEur

Gallbladder Disease

Gallstones

Gallstones (cholelithiasis) are very common, particularly in Western countries. They form when some components of bile – the digestive fluid made by the liver and stored in the gallbladder – crystallise into solid deposits known as **gallstones**.

Gallstones vary in size. They may stay in the gallbladder for long periods without causing symptoms, or they can move from the gallbladder into the **bile ducts**, as shown in the illustration.



Although medication can be used in some selected cases, **surgery is the definitive treatment for gallstones that cause symptoms**, especially as gallstones can lead to a number of complications.

Biliary colic

Biliary colic is pain usually caused by gallstones. It is typically felt in the **upper right part of the abdomen, below the ribs**. The pain may come on after eating or during the night, and may be accompanied by **nausea and vomiting**.

Acute cholecystitis

Gallstones can cause inflammation of the gallbladder wall, known as **acute cholecystitis**. This condition needs medical assessment and close monitoring. In uncomplicated cases, treatment may begin conservatively with painkillers, antibiotics and supportive care. However, cholecystitis can progress to more serious complications, and in these cases **urgent surgery may become necessary**.

Laparoscopic gallbladder surgery

At our centre, gallbladder disease is mainly treated with **minimally invasive laparoscopic surgery**, traditionally known as the **four-port technique**.

Specialised surgical instruments are passed through small incisions in the abdominal wall to remove the gallbladder. In some selected cases **open surgery** may be necessary, depending on the patient's condition and the complexity of the disease.