

Gallstones Discharge Information

What are gallstones?

The gallbladder is a small sac that lies under the liver and is part of the digestive system. The liver makes bile, a substance that helps digest the fats you eat. Bile ducts drain bile from the liver into the gallbladder and small intestines. Bile can contain cholesterol and other substances from the breakdown of old blood cells (bilirubin). If there is too much cholesterol or bilirubin in the bile, it can become solid, forming what is called a gallstone. Gallstones can stay in the gallbladder or they may move into the bile ducts. It's possible for stones to move into the main bile duct and block it. If the bile flow from the gallbladder is blocked, the gallbladder can become inflamed and infected. This condition is called cholecystitis. If the bile backs up in the liver, it can cause your skin and white part of your eyes to turn yellow (jaundice). Gallstones can also cause inflammation in the pancreas (pancreatitis) that can be life threatening.

You are more likely to have gallstones if:

- You are female
- You are pregnant, are on hormone replacement therapy, or take birth control pills
- You are overweight
- You have type 2 diabetes
- You are Native American
- You have sickle cell anemia or another disease that breaks down red blood cells
- Other members of your family have had gallstones

How can I take care of myself when I go home?

How long it takes to get better depends on the treatment you need and any complications you may have had from your gallstones. If you did not have your gallbladder removed, you may need to make lifestyle changes to reduce the chances of developing more gallstones in the future.

Management

- Your provider will give you a list of your medicines when you leave the hospital.
 - Know your medicines. Know what they look like, how much you are to take each time, how often you are to take them, and why you take each one.
 - Take your medicines exactly as your provider tells you to.
 - Carry a list of your medicines in your wallet or purse. Include any nonprescription medicines and supplements on the list.
- Your provider may prescribe medicine to:
 - Treat pain
 - Treat or prevent an infection

- Prevent side effects, such as nausea or constipation, from other treatments
- Dissolve gallstones
- If you have had surgery, to care for your surgical wound:
 - Keep your surgery site clean.
 - If you are told to change the dressing on your incision, wash your hands before and after changing the dressing and after disposing of the dressing.

Appointments

- Follow your provider's instructions for follow-up appointments.
- Talk with your provider about any questions or fears you have.

Diet, Exercise, and Other Lifestyle Changes

- Follow the treatment plan your healthcare provider prescribes.
- Follow activity restrictions, such as not driving or operating machinery, as recommended by your healthcare provider or pharmacist, especially if you are taking pain medicines.
- Get plenty of rest while you're recovering. Try to get at least 7 to 9 hours of sleep each night.
- Eat a healthy diet.
- Drink enough fluids to keep your urine light yellow in color, unless you are told to limit fluids.
- Ask your healthcare provider if there are any foods or medicines you should avoid.
- Lose weight if you need to and keep a healthy weight.
- Exercise as your provider recommends.

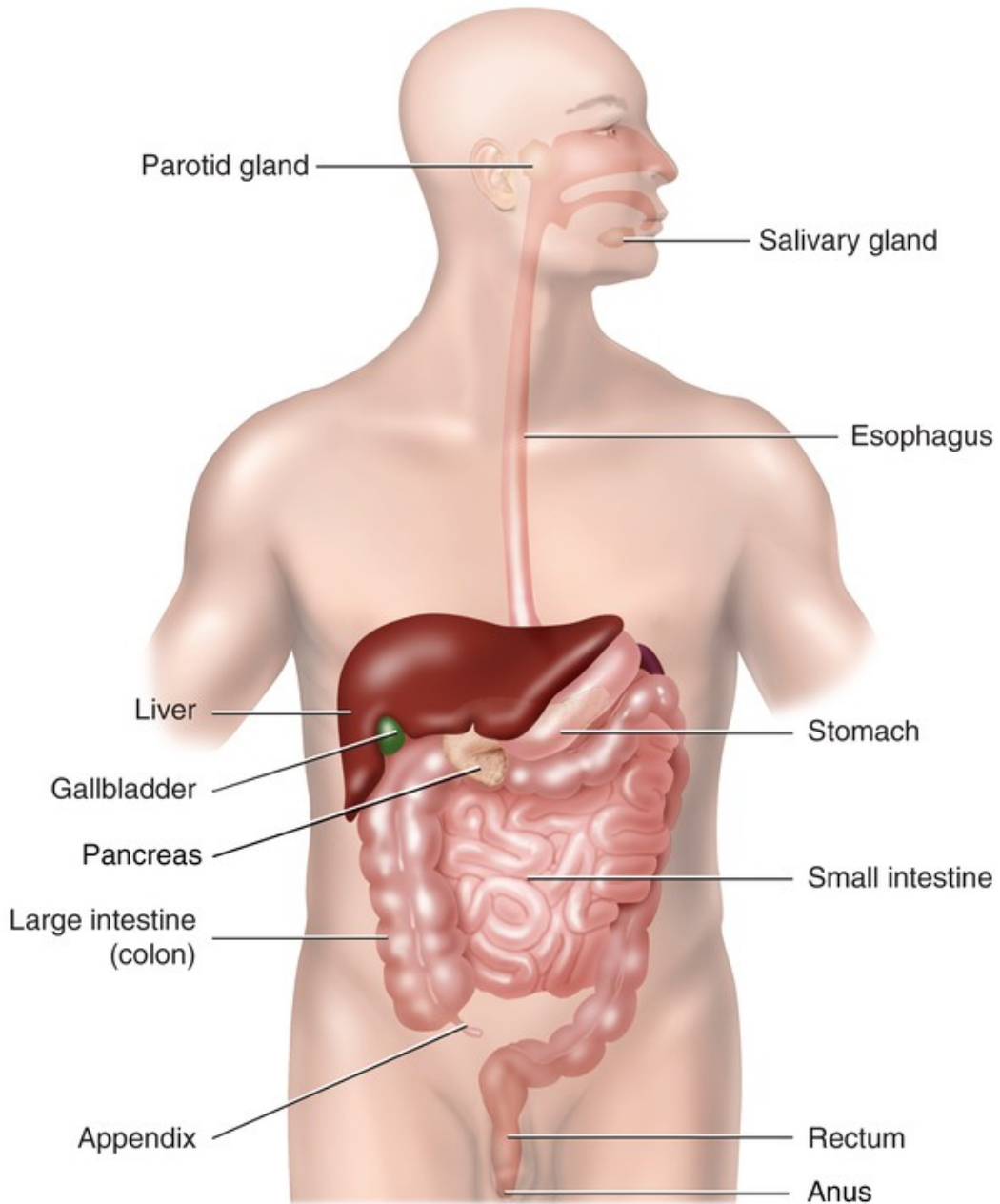
Call your healthcare provider if you have new or worsening:

- Abdominal pain
- Back pain
- Chest pain
- Nausea or vomiting
- Signs of infection around your surgical wound, if you had surgery. These include:
 - The area around your wound is more red or painful
 - The wound area is very warm to touch
 - You have blood, pus, or other fluid coming from your wound area
 - You have a fever higher than 101.5° F (38.6° C)
 - You have chills or muscle aches
- Yellow skin or eyes
- Light colored bowel movements
- Dark urine

Developed by RelayHealth.

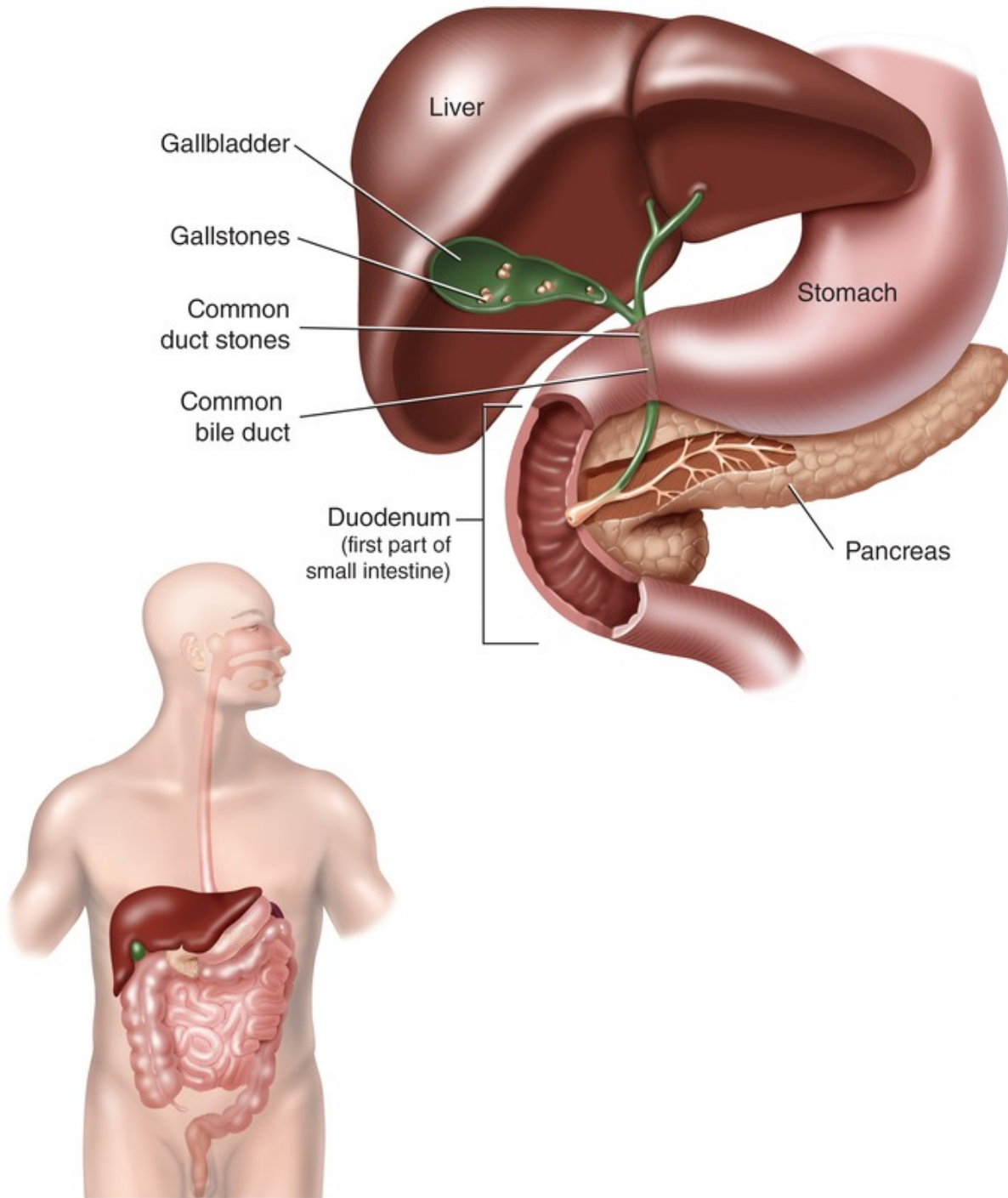
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Digestive System



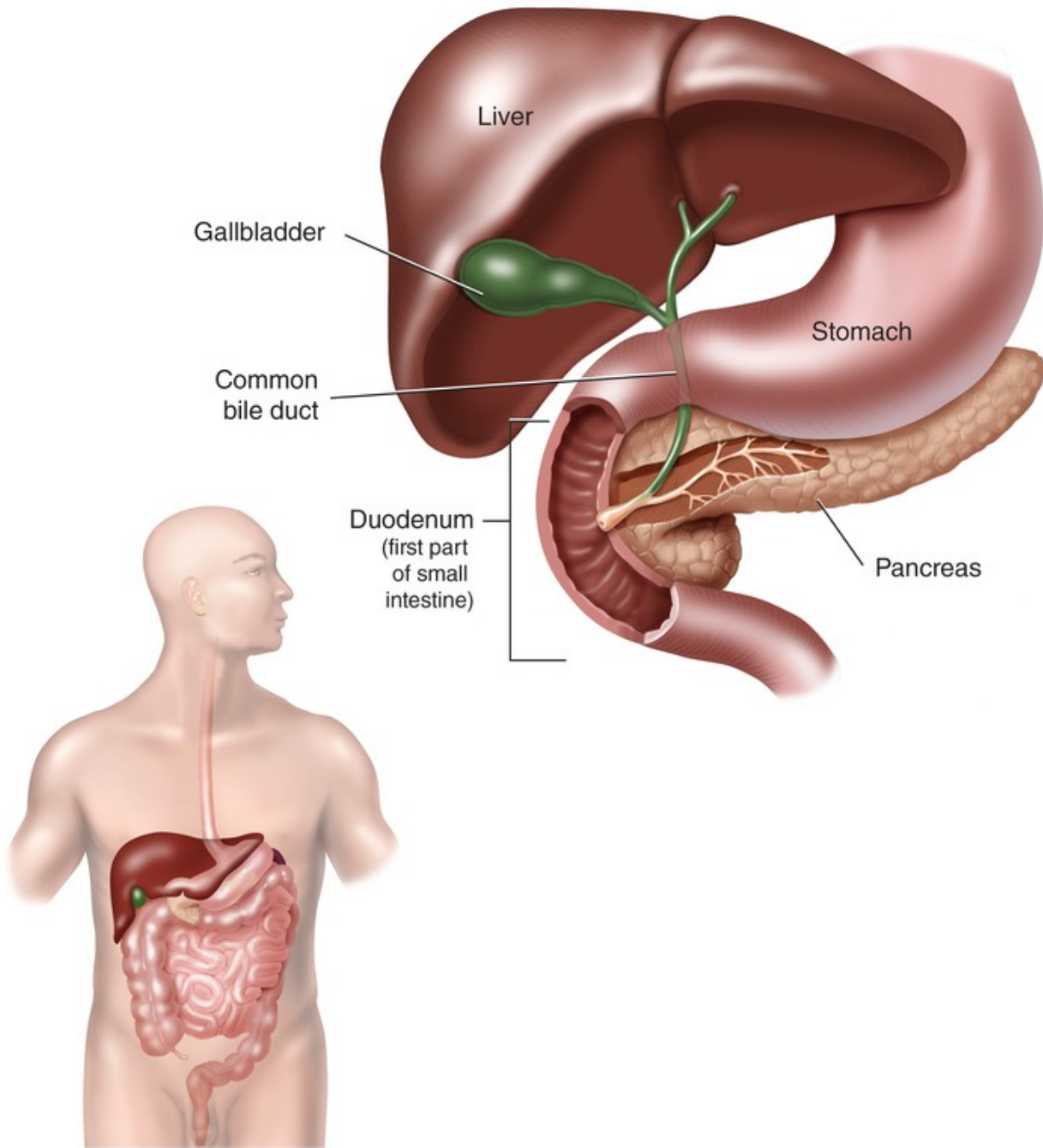
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Gallstones



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Liver, Gallbladder, and Pancreas



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