



Removal of gall bladder - cholecystectomy





Introduction

General Surgery is a branch of medicine dealing with the structure and diseases of the oesophagus (gullet), stomach, and gallbladder. You may be required to have diagnostic tests in order to diagnose your condition and you may require surgical intervention to treat your condition.

What is cholecystectomy surgery? (Also known as gallbladder removal surgery)

The gallbladder is a small, pouch-like organ in the upper right part of your tummy. It stores bile, a fluid produced by the liver that helps break down fatty foods.

Surgery to remove the gallbladder is usually carried out if you have painful gallstones. These are small stones that can form in the gallbladder as a result of an imbalance in the substances that make up bile.

Gallstones often cause no symptoms and you may not realise you have them, but occasionally they can block the flow of bile and irritate the gallbladder (acute cholecystitis) or pancreas (acute pancreatitis).

This can cause symptoms such as:

- Sudden and intense tummy pain
- Feeling nauseous and vomiting
- Yellowing of the skin and the whites of the eyes (jaundice)

Surgery to remove the gallbladder is the most effective treatment in the vast majority of cases. You don't need a gallbladder, so surgery to take it out is often recommended if you develop any problems within this area.

For the duration of the surgery you will be under general anaesthesia, so you are asleep and pain-free. Surgery most often takes approximately two hours.

Guidance for patients

While you are waiting for your procedure, your GP or consultant may recommend an alternative management or treatment to support your symptoms. It is important that you consider these options too in the short term to support your wellbeing. These may include:

- Lifestyle changes
- Medication



What should I do if my health is deteriorating?

If you feel that there is a change in your condition **please contact your GP or NHS 111 for medical review in the first instance**. They will be able to advise if this is something they can support you with during your wait or they can redirect you to the appropriate service in order to determine a management plan.

Contact us

To change or cancel your appointment, please call:

For Luton & Dunstable University Hospital

Outpatient appointment: 01582 561385

To cancel or reschedule surgery: 01582 497053

Monday to Friday, 9am to 4pm.

For Bedford Hospital

Outpatient appointment: 01234 355122 **Ext:** 2035

To cancel or reschedule surgery: 01234 792199 **or** 01234 795953

Monday to Friday, 9am to 4pm.

Alternatively, you can visit our website to request a change to your appointment online by visiting the following links:

Luton Site: <https://www.bedfordshirehospitals.nhs.uk/change-cancel-appointment/change-cancel-appointment-luton-and-dunstable-university-hospital/>

Bedford site: [Change / Cancel Your Appointment | Bedford Hospital \(bedfordshirehospitals.nhs.uk\)](https://www.bedfordshirehospitals.nhs.uk/change-cancel-appointment/change-cancel-appointment-bedford-hospital/)

To change or cancel your surgery admission date, please telephone the contact number on your admission letter between 9am to 4pm, Monday to Friday.

For any other queries, please contact your consultant's secretary. Their contact details will be on the most recent letter from your consultant.