

Tips on following a low fat diet if you have gallstones

How to eat

- Eat less.
- Eat when hungry. Stop eating when you are full
- Do not feel obliged to eat every course and finish every portion
- Do not “graze” just because food is around

What to eat and what not to eat

- Eat mainly plants; less meat
- Eat fish or poultry in preference to red meat, as red meat carries more fat.
- Eat home cooked food (where you can control what goes in, rather than purchased or processed foods).
- When buying food, look at the fat content (over 17.5% is high fat content; 3-17.5% is moderate fat content; less than 3% is low fat; see the next page)
- Avoid butter, cream, lard and high-fat cheese.
- Cut down on oily curries and stews, fish and chips, fry-ups.
- Cut down on cakes, pastries, croissants, cookies and ice cream.
- Nothing needs to be totally forbidden. An occasional treat is perfectly OK. But if there is something specific that triggers your attacks of pain (often this can be cheesy pasta, burgers, fry-up breakfasts, take-out curries), AVOID that at all costs.

How to cook

- Trim all fat and skin off meat
- When cooking vegetables or meat, try to boil, steam, grill, bake or shallow-fry in a non-stick pan rather than deep-fry or cook in a rich sauce.
- Try and use low-fat alternatives where they exist. When baking cakes, half of the butter can usually be replaced by zero fat yogurt,

If you get an attack of biliary pain

- For a mild attack, try Paracetamol and/or Ibuprofen (not the latter if you have stomach ulcers or asthma). Buscopan may help too.
- Stronger painkillers like Co-codamol should be used only if you have them at hand, and have taken them before.
- If the pain is very severe to start with or does not settle with these medications, please seek urgent medical help.
- Also remember - just because you have gallstones does not mean you cannot have other problems like angina or acid reflux.

Food type	Low-fat foods	Medium-fat foods	High-fat foods
Cereal foods	Bread. Oats, breakfast cereals. Rice and pasta. Rotis/chapatis.	Plain biscuits. Scones.	Croissants. Fried bread. Cakes and most biscuits. Pastries. Syrupy Indian sweets Most puddings
Fruit, vegetable and nuts	All vegetables and fruit (fresh, frozen or tinned). Dried beans and lentils. Baked or boiled potatoes. Dried fruit.	Oven chips are lower in fat than fried chips. The following contain fat, of the unsaturated sort: Avocados Olives Almonds Pecans Hazelnuts Walnuts	Chips. Fried or roast potatoes. Fried, creamed, buttered or cheesed vegetables. Crisps. Coconut. Brazil nuts. Roasted peanuts.
Fish	All white fish. Shellfish.	Oily fish such as tuna (fresh, not tinned), herring, mackerel, sardines, kippers, pilchards, or salmon. These contain healthy omega-3 fats.	Fish roe. Caviar.
Meat	Lean white meat such as chicken and turkey (without skin).	Lean ham, beef, pork, and lamb. Lean mince. Liver and kidney.	Visible fat on meat. Crackling. Sausages, burgers Pâtés. Duck, goose. Pies & pasties. Samosas, fried dumplings
Eggs, dairy	Skimmed or semi-skimmed milk. Cottage or curd cheese. Low-fat yoghurt. Egg whites.	Edam. Camembert. Eggs.	Whole milk. Cream. Ice cream. Most hard cheeses. Chocolate. Cream cheese.
Fats and spreads	None.	Low-fat spreads. Margarine high in polyunsaturates. Corn oil, sunflower oil and olive oil.	Butter. Dripping & lard. Margarine not high in polyunsaturates
Drinks and soups	Tea and coffee. Mineral water. Fruit juices.	Packet soups.	Creamy soups. Milky drinks.

Adapted from information available on the internet (<http://patient.info/health/low-fat-diet-sheet>).