

Gall-Bladder Disorders

The gall-bladder is a pear-shaped organ, 10 cm. long and three to five cm. wide, attached to the under-surface of the liver on the right side. The main function of the gall-bladder is to store the bile secreted by the liver. Bile is an excretion composed mainly of bile salts and acids, color pigments and cholesterol. Bile assists in the digestion and absorption of fats and the absorption of fat-soluble vitamins A, D, E and K, minerals and calcium.

The gall-bladder is usually full and relaxed between meals. During the process of digestion, when food reaches the duodenum, the hormone cholecystokinin begins to be produced in the internal mucosa. When this hormone reaches the gall-bladder through the bloodstream, it causes the gall-bladder to contract, thereby releasing the bile concentrate into the duodenum via a common duct.

The main problems which afflict the gall-bladder are an inflammatory condition known as cholecystitis and gall-stones. Gall-stones are usually caused by disturbances in the composition of the bile. A change in the ratio of cholesterol and bile salts may result in the formation of deposits. At the start, these may be in the form of fine gravel. But these fine particles constitute the nucleus for further deposits, ultimately leading to the formation of larger stones. An irritation of the lining of the gall-bladder due to inflammation may also lead to the formation of particles. The incidence of gall-stones is higher in females than males, particularly in those who are obese.

Symptoms

Indigestion, gas, a feeling of fullness after meals, constipation, nausea and disturbed vision are the usual symptoms of gall-bladder disorders. Other symptoms are intolerance to fats, dizziness, jaundice, anaemia, acne and other lesions. Varicose veins, haemorrhoids and breakdown of capillaries are also disorders associated with gall-bladder troubles.

The Cure

Surgery becomes necessary if the gall-stones are very large or in cases in which they have been present for long. Smaller gall-stones can, however, be cleared through natural cure methods. Diet is the basic factor in the treatment of gall bladder disorders. In cases of acute gall-bladder inflammation, the patient should fast for two or three days, until the acute condition clears.

Nothing but water should be taken during the fast. After the fast, the patient should take carrot, beet, grapefruit, lemon and grape juice for a few days. Ensure that the diet contains an adequate amount of lacto-vegetarian, consisting of raw and cooked vegetables, vegetable juices, and a moderate amount of fruit and seeds. Yogurt, cottage cheese and a tablespoon of olive oil twice a day should also be taken. Oil serves as a stimulant for the production of bile and lipase, the fat digesting enzymes. All meats, eggs, animal fats and processed and denatured fats as well as fried foods should be avoided. The diet should also exclude refined carbohydrates, especially sugar, sugar products, alcohol, soft drinks, cakes, puddings, ice-cream, coffee and citrus fruits. The patient should eat small meals at frequent intervals, rather than three large meals. The following is the suggested menu for those suffering from gall-bladder disorders:

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On rising: A glass of warm water mixed with lemon juice and honey or fresh fruit juice.

Breakfast: Fresh fruit, one or two slices of whole meal toast and a cup of skimmed powder milk.

Mid morning: Fresh fruit juice.

Lunch: Vegetable soup, a large salad consisting of vegetables in season with dressing of lemon or vegetable oil. Fresh fruit for dessert, if desired.

Dinner: Vegetable oil, one or two lightly cooked vegetables, baked potato, brown rice or whole wheat chapatti and a glass of buttermilk.

Water Treatment:

Regular applications of hot and cold fomentations to the abdomen improve the circulation of the liver and gall-bladder. They also induce contractions of the gall-bladder, thereby improving the flow of bile. A cold hip bath improves the general abdominal tone. The pain of gall-stone colic can be relieved by the application of hot packs or fomentation to the upper abdominal area. A warm water enema at body temperature will help eliminate faecal accumulations if the patient is constipated.

Exercise is essential as physical inactivity can lead to lazy gall-bladder type indigestion which may ultimately result in the formation of stones. Yogic asanas which are beneficial in toning up the liver and gall-bladder are : sarvangasana, paschimottanasana, shalabhasana, dhanurasana and bhujangasana.

Reference

Shri H.K. Bakhru. (1999). Natures Cure.