

### **Cholecystitis**

Cholecystitis represents inflammation of the gallbladder. The gallbladder is located below your liver on the right side of your abdomen. It is a small organ that is responsible for releasing a digestive aid called bile into your small intestines through a small tube. Stones can cause this tube to become blocked which leads to bile backing up into the gallbladder instead of flowing into the small intestines. This is the most common cause of cholecystitis, but other conditions like tumors, anatomical anomalies, various illnesses, or infection may also cause cholecystitis.

#### **Signs and symptoms that are commonly experienced may include:**

- Severe pain in the upper right and central abdominal areas (may radiate to your shoulder or back)
- Abdominal wall that is sensitive when touched
- Nausea and vomiting
- Jaundice (yellowing of skin or sclera)
- Fever
- Typically signs and symptoms are worse after eating, especially fatty substances

#### **Prevention**

- Achieve and maintain a healthy weight
  - Rapid weight loss can contribute to gallstones, aim to lose 1-2 pounds per week
- Healthy diet
  - Diets high in fruits, vegetables, and whole grains is best. High fat and low fiber diets contribute to the risk of gallstones.

#### **Diagnosis**

Physical exam and imaging studies such as an ultrasound and HIDA scan can help diagnose this condition.

#### **Treatment**

Early treatment is key. If cholecystitis is left untreated severe complications may occur. Such as, infection or rupture of the gallbladder. Medications to help control stones may be utilized. However, a cholecystectomy, which is surgical removal of the gallbladder is often required.