



SICKLE CELL CLINIC

Gallbladder

What is the Gallbladder?

- The gallbladder (GB) is a small organ located on the right side of the body.
- The gallbladder stores and releases bile.
- Bile helps the body digest fat in the foods we eat.

What are gallstones?

- Gallstones (GS) are caused by waste products of broken down red blood cells.
- The waste collects in the gallbladder and forms sludge or stones.
- They are more common in patients with sickle cell disease (SCD).

What are the symptoms of gallstones?

- Pain in the right side of the abdomen.
- Some people will feel pain in the right shoulder area.
- Yellowing of eyes (jaundice).
- Nausea and vomiting, especially after eating fatty foods.
- If a GS becomes stuck in the common bile duct (CBD), it is considered an emergency as your child can get very sick.
- If your child has persistent vomiting and severe right-sided abdominal pain or shoulder pain, he/she will need to be seen in the ER immediately.

How are gallstones diagnosed?

- We will perform an abdominal ultra sound.
- Your child cannot have anything to eat or drink at least 4 hours prior to the test.

What happens if your child has gallstones?

- Avoid eating fatty foods (pizza, chicken fingers, fries, cheeseburger, etc.).
- An appointment for the Surgery Clinic may be set up to discuss removing the gallbladder (cholecystectomy).
- **If surgery is recommended:**
 - You will have a blood transfusion in the Hematology Clinic.
 - You will be admitted to the hospital for IV fluids to keep you hydrated.
- **If your child has a gallstone stuck in the common bile duct, it is an emergency.**
 - He/she will be admitted to the hospital and first undergo a procedure to remove the gallstone from the common bile duct.
 - Then he/she will have surgery to remove the gall bladder.