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:
  o You will have a blood transfusion in the Hematology Clinic.
  o 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.
  o He/she will be admitted to the hospital and first undergo a procedure to remove the gallstone from the common bile duct.
  o Then he/she will have surgery to remove the gall bladder.