GALLSTONES

Causes of Gallstones

It is not fully known why some people get gallstones and others don’t. There are certain things, though, that are known to raise the chances of getting gallstones:

- A greater amount of cholesterol or bilirubin in bile
- Hormones or medications that result in decreased emptying of the gallbladder
- Obesity
- Not having an active lifestyle
- Being female
- Being over 40 years old
- Diabetes
- Liver disease
- Family history of gallstones

Pigment (bilirubin) gallstones are found most often in:
- Patients with severe liver disease.
- Patients with some blood diseases, such as sickle cell anemia and leukemia.

Cholesterol gallstones are more common and found most often in:
- Women over 20 years of age.
- Pregnant women.
- Men over 60 years of age.
- Overweight men and women.
- People on “crash diets” who lose a lot of weight quickly.
- People who use certain medications, such as birth control pills and cholesterol-lowering agents.
- Native Americans and Hispanics of Mexican origin.