



CRITICAL THINKING

What risks for peptic ulcers involve lifestyle, not genetics? What lifestyle changes should a patient with a peptic ulcer make?

Medications to Treat Gallstones

Cholelithiasis, or the abnormal condition of having stones in the gallbladder, is caused when cholesterol or calcium forms a **calculus** (stone) (Fig. 19-4). Cholesterol cannot be seen on radiographs, but calcium stones can. Symptoms of gallstones are bloating, gas, and nausea. Most symptomatic patients undergo surgical removal of the stones and/or gallbladder. For patients who cannot tolerate surgery, medication such as ursodiol (Actigall, Urso) may be prescribed in oral form. Ursodiol is a naturally occurring bile acid that decreases the production of cholesterol and inhibits absorption of cholesterol by the intestines. Therapy can take up to 2 years, but if partial dissolution of the gallstones is not seen within 12 months, this treatment is likely to be unsuccessful. Side effects include flulike symptoms, stomach pain, dizziness, back pain, and headache.

Medications to Treat Obesity

Obesity rates in North America are increasing and are prompting many physicians to prescribe medications to decrease appetite. Many factors cause obesity: metabolic abnormalities, overeating, insulin resistance, and a sedentary lifestyle. A person is considered **morbidly obese** when he or she is 20% above ideal body weight. Obesity increases the workload of the pancreas, which helps digest carbohydrates, and the liver, which helps digest fats. It also causes increased workload on the circulatory system. Lifestyle changes are the best way to reduce obesity, but anorexiant (appetite suppressants) are sometimes necessary.

Appetite Suppressants

Appetite suppressants, also known as anorexiant, give a feeling of fullness. Suppressants can be used (with caution) to decrease food intake and thus decrease obesity potential. They mimic the sympathetic nervous system, so most are controlled substances. They are oral medications intended for short-term use only. Examples of these drugs include phentermine (Adipex-P, Oby-Cap, T-Diet, Zantryl). Taking phentermine concurrently with other diet medications can cause pulmonary hypertension, which can be fatal. In addition, phentermine can be habit-forming and affects cognitive function, so patients must be extremely cautious when taking this medication. Appetite suppressants sometimes create nausea.

Lipase Inhibitors

Lipase inhibitors such as orlistat (Alli, Xenical) can also be used to manage obesity. These drugs bind to the enzyme lipase, so the intestines cannot break down dietary fat. Instead, fats are eliminated in the feces. This reduces the amount of fat absorbed into the body and thereby reduces serum lipids. These medications are given by mouth and should not be taken by children or patients with chronic health

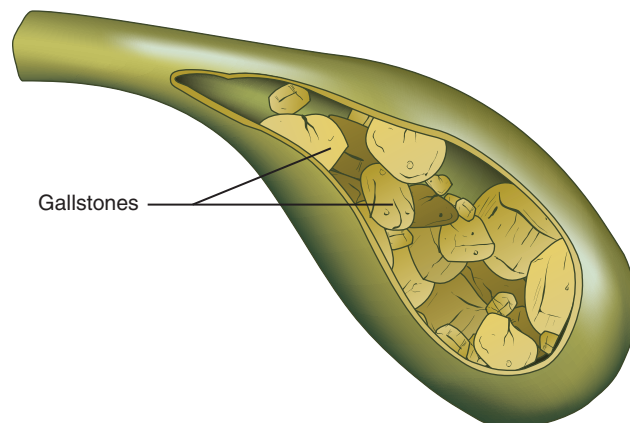


FIGURE 19-4: Cholelithiasis.