

Laparoscopic surgical removal of the gallbladder in pediatric patients is safe

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A recent study conducted by Mayo Clinic researchers recommends laparoscopic cholecystectomies (surgical removal of the gallbladder) for pediatric patients suffering from gallstones and other gallbladder diseases. This study was published in *Surgical Laparoscopy Endoscopy & Percutaneous Techniques*.

A cholecystectomy is a surgical procedure performed to remove the [gallbladder](#), a pear-shaped organ located below the liver on the upper right side of the abdomen. The gallbladder is responsible for collecting and storing bile, which is a fluid secreted by the liver. During a laparoscopic cholecystectomy, four incisions are made in the abdomen. Then, a small video camera and other special tools are used to remove

the gallbladder.

"Cholelithiasis and other gallbladder diseases requiring cholecystectomies are less common in children compared to adults," says Michael B. Ishitani, M.D., lead author of the study. "Recently, however, rising rates of obesity in the pediatric population have led to an increase of [gallstones](#) found in children. Therefore, it was important for us to review the current clinical practices to ensure that pediatric patients are being treated properly."

The study analyzed 202 cases of laparoscopic cholecystectomy performed on children below 18 years of age between the years 1990 and 2010. Researchers found that no common bile duct injuries were reported in the study group. In the follow-up, only 9 percent of patients still had some abdominal pain without associated gallbladder disease or gallstones. Therefore, the study concluded that laparoscopic cholecystectomies are safe procedures to perform on pediatric patients.

"We are refining our surgical techniques and are now performing all pediatric laparoscopic cholecystectomies using a small incision through the belly button. However, further studies are required to elucidate which [pediatric patients](#) will benefit the most from [gallbladder removal](#)," explains Dr. Ishitani.

Provided by Mayo Clinic

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