

STONE SOUR

Staying Healthy with Dr. Aieta, N.D.



Dr. Aieta,

I am a 50-year-old man and have recently been experiencing severe abdominal pains, typically following meals. I went to my family doctor, and he sent me for testing. They found that I have gallstones. A specialist then recommended I have my gallbladder removed as soon as possible. I am very reluctant to do this, as I believe we have gallbladders for a reason. I hold this belief despite the surgeon telling me the gallbladder serves very little purpose and that the surgery

is simple. I am looking for alternatives before I decide to go under the knife.

Do you have any non-surgical solutions for me?

Mike K.

The gallbladder is a digestive organ located in the right upper portion of the abdomen. It stores bile, which is made in the liver, and releases it during meals to aid in the digestion and absorption of fats and essential nutrients. So, it's far from useless.

Some individuals living in the western hemisphere develop stones in their gallbladder, which consist primarily of cholesterol, calcium and bilirubin (a breakdown product of hemoglobin). In some cases, the stones produce no symptoms. Other people with gallstones experience recurrent abdominal pain, bloating and gas. If the gallbladder becomes inflamed or infected, or if a stone gets caught in a bile duct, serious problems can result and emergency surgery may be necessary.

Doctors often recommend that patients with painful gallstones have their gallbladder removed, either to relieve symptoms

or to prevent potential emergencies. Silent gallstones typically do not require surgery.

Other than surgery, conventional medicine does not have much to offer. Most doctors advise patients to avoid fatty foods; however, this alone does not usually eliminate symptoms.

I have noticed that in the majority of cases, abdominal symptoms attributed to gallstones are caused by food allergies and eliminating certain allergenic foods can result in nearly a 100 percent reduction in symptoms. According to clinical experience, the most common symptom-provoking foods are eggs, pork, onions and dairy products, but other foods can also cause symptoms.

Typically, I have patients do an elimination diet in which they avoid all common problematic foods for a week and slowly add one back at a time. The offending food typically causes immediate problems, so the patient knows what to stay away from. Most patients will identify three or four foods that really cause problems. I have seen numerous patients with gallstone attacks, and not one has turned to surgery

after trying the elimination method.

Preventing the formation of stones is also very important. Research shows that a diet low in refined carbohydrates (sugar and white flour) and high in fiber and complex carbs may help prevent gallstones from developing. Vitamin C in high doses has also been shown to improve the flow of bile from the gallbladder.

So, before you go under the knife to have your gallbladder removed, try eliminating allergenic foods from your diet, and eat more fiber and less sugar to prevent more stones from forming.

Dr. Frank Aieta is a board-certified and licensed Naturopathic Physician with a private practice in West Hartford, Conn. He specializes in the treatment of disease, using natural therapies such as acupuncture, homeopathy, spinal manipulation, clinical nutrition, and herbal medicine. If there is a specific topic you would like to see addressed in an upcoming column, you can e-mail him at DrAieta@aol.com, or visit www.DrAieta.com for additional information.

ACTION CHALLENGE

Women's Fitness with Lisa Thomas

I challenge you to lose weight this spring.

It may be cold right now, but not for long. The warm weather is on its way. Get into the best shape of your life with a realistic approach to weight loss. I challenge you to train and eat right, and to give yourself the gift of health and that body you want.

Specifically, I'm challenging you to an online team workout program that you can do anywhere. Hear me out.

You may need a few pieces of equipment, or you can improvise with some things you might have in your house already. You can do it. Eat right with a meal plan that is easy to follow and receive e-mail follow-ups and suggestions on your meals.

Are you ready for this challenge? Are you up for a new you?

Feel good, move better, get stronger and shape your body the way you want it. Together we can lose a few pounds a week.

Whether you're a total newbie or you've been at the gym forever, now is the time to give yourself everything you've got. Get moving and get motivated. This is about committing your body, mind and soul to

your own personal goals. It's time to put aside your excuses for slacking off, not exercising, cheating on your diet — whatever.

You need to get serious about getting fit.

I'm going to help you by providing weekly weight-loss tips, exercises that are at your level and change as your abilities change. I have some new exercises that are harder than ever for some of the more advanced fitness enthusiasts. In addition, I'll provide effective workout techniques, and good old-school BootCAMP aggression. I know you can do this, and I know you want to make that change.

Here is what to expect and how to get started. To start, you must weigh-in, a "before" photo with the date, and your current eating and workout habits. E-mail them to me. Every Sunday, by e-mail, you will get your weekly workouts, calorie counts, and meal suggestions.

Every Friday, weigh-in and e-mail me back your workouts. Check in and keep track of your progress. After eight weeks, if you reach your goal we can train in person — *for free*. I'll pay your guest fee to the gym I am working at for one week, and

you get two one-hour sessions with me.

At the end of the challenge I ask that you write a paragraph about your eight-week challenge and how it changed you. E-mail me to get started (t.fitness@hotmail.com) and please write, "Weight Loss Challenge" in the subject line.

Get ready. Get psyched. And get going on those weight-loss goals. Join The Lisa Thomas Fitness Club.

Lisa Thomas is a personal trainer/fitness



coach in the Greater Springfield area, as well as owner of Thomas Fitness Center and Fit Kidz of Massachusetts. Contact her at (413) 426-5543.

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Jim Whipple



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