

## MY WEIRD PROMPTS

Podcast Transcript

### EPISODE #189

# The Leaky Faucet: Thriving After Gallbladder Removal

Published January 08, 2026 • Runtime: 22:37

<https://myweirdprompts.com/episode/gallbladder-removal-digestive-health/>

## EPISODE SYNOPSIS

Years after gallbladder surgery, many people still face bloating and discomfort—a condition known as Post-Cholecystectomy Syndrome. In this episode, Herman and Corn break down the biology of bile, explaining why your digestive "plumbing" struggles with high-fat loads once the storage tank is gone. From networking analogies to a complete low-fat shopping list, the brothers provide a practical guide for regaining control of your gut. Discover how to use acid, herbs, and lean proteins to create gourmet meals that won't weigh you down. Whether you're looking for the perfect "fish en papillote" recipe or a surprising chocolate mousse hack, this episode is your manual for flavorful, bloat-free living. Join us for a deep dive into digestive health that proves low-fat doesn't have to mean low-flavor.

## DANIEL'S PROMPT

### Daniel

"I'd like to talk about nutrition and diet. I had my gallbladder removed several years ago and have since struggled with bloating and discomfort after eating, especially with higher-fat foods. I want to get back into home cooking and preparing my own meals using low-fat staples. Could you provide some advice for a weekly shopping list and some recipe ideas for a fun, varied, low-fat diet?"

# TRANSCRIPT

## Corn

Hey everyone, welcome back to My Weird Prompts. We are coming to you from a somewhat rainy Jerusalem today, and honestly, it is the perfect weather to be sitting inside and talking through some listener ideas. I am Corn, and I am here with my brother.

## Herman

Herman Poppleberry, present and ready for some deep dives. It is good to be here, Corn. I have been spending most of my morning looking at some interesting research on digestive enzymes and some recent meta-analyses on bile acid malabsorption, which, as it turns out, is incredibly relevant to the prompt our housemate Daniel sent over this morning.

## Corn

Yeah, Daniel was actually just talking to us about this in the kitchen. He had a bit of a rough time after lunch today. He mentioned he had his gallbladder removed about six or seven years ago, and he is still dealing with some pretty significant bloating and discomfort, especially when he eats things that are a bit higher in fat. He was holding his son Ezra and joking about looking like he was expecting another one himself because of the bloating.

## Herman

It is a concern a lot of people share after this surgery. Ongoing digestive symptoms after gallbladder removal are sometimes referred to as Post-Cholecystectomy Syndrome, or P■C■S. And it is something that people do not always get the full lowdown on after the surgery. Doctors often tell you that you can return to a normal diet after a few weeks, but the reality for a lot of people is that the plumbing has fundamentally changed. You cannot just dump a high-fat load into the system and expect it to handle it the same way it did before.

## Corn

Right, and he specifically asked us to help him get back into home cooking with a focus on low-fat staples and some recipe ideas that are not just boring or restrictive. He wants variety. But before we get to the shopping list, Herman, can we talk about the why? Why does losing a gallbladder make a falafel wrap feel like a lead weight in your stomach five years later?

## Herman

I would love to. So, the gallbladder is essentially a storage tank. Your liver is the factory that actually produces bile, which is the fluid used to break down fats. In a person with a gallbladder, the liver makes the bile, and it gets tucked away in that little pouch. When you eat something fatty, the gallbladder gets a hormonal signal to contract and squirt a concentrated dose of bile into the small intestine to emulsify those fats.

## Corn

Like dish soap on a greasy pan.

## Herman

Exactly. It breaks the big fat globules into tiny droplets called micelles so that your enzymes, specifically lipase, can actually get to work. Now, when you remove the gallbladder, you have lost the storage tank. The liver is still making bile, but now it is just constantly trickling into the digestive tract. It is like a leaky faucet instead of a high-pressure hose. So, when Daniel eats a high-fat meal, there may not be enough concentrated bile available to handle the sudden influx of lipids efficiently.

## Corn

So the fat just sits there?

## Herman

A larger portion of the fat can remain unabsorbed as it moves through the small intestine, especially after very fatty meals. When more unabsorbed fat reaches the large intestine, it can contribute to gas and changes in stool. Plus, unabsorbed fat can pull water into the colon, causing osmotic diarrhea, which is that other digestive issue we do not need to get into while people might be eating their lunch.

## Corn

That makes total sense. It is a capacity issue. Your system can handle a certain amount of fat per hour, but it cannot handle a peak load anymore. This reminds me of some of the networking concepts we talked about in episode two hundred eighty-eight when we were discussing Border Gateway Protocol and traffic management. If you do not have a buffer, the system gets overwhelmed by spikes.

## Herman

That is a great analogy. The gallbladder is the buffer. Without it, you have to manage the traffic at the source, which means being more intentional about what you are putting into the system. And for someone like Daniel, who is years post-op and still struggling, he might also want to look into ox bile supplements or vegan lipase enzymes to help provide that missing chemical assistance during larger meals, ideally in consultation with a healthcare professional.

## Corn

So, let's talk about that management. Daniel wants a shopping list and some recipe ideas. If we are looking at a low-fat, high-variety diet in early twenty-six, where do we start? What are the staples that should be in the cart every week?

## Herman

The first thing is to redefine what we mean by low fat. We are not talking about those processed snack foods from the nineteen nineties that just replaced fat with sugar. We want whole foods that are naturally lean. For the shopping list, I always start with the foundation, which is complex carbohydrates and grains.

## Corn

Right, because those are going to provide the energy that he might feel like he is losing if he cuts back on fats.

## Herman

Exactly. I would put farro, quinoa, and black rice at the top of the list. They are high in fiber, which can help regulate the transit time of bile acids, and they are incredibly versatile. Also, oats. Steel-cut oats are fantastic because they have a lower glycemic index and can be made savory or sweet.

## Corn

I have been really into savory oats lately with a little bit of soy sauce, some nutritional yeast, and some steamed greens. It sounds weird but it is a great low-fat breakfast.

## Herman

It is excellent. For protein, we need to look at the leanest options. White fish like cod, tilapia, or sea bass are almost entirely protein with very little fat. For poultry, it has to be skinless chicken breast or turkey breast. And do not overlook plant-based proteins. Lentils, chickpeas, and black beans are staples for a reason. They are relatively low in fat and have a ton of protein and fiber. Just watch the portion size on the beans initially to avoid adding to the bloating.

## Corn

What about dairy? Daniel mentioned he struggles with some of the richer stuff.

## Herman

Dairy is a big one. I would suggest switching to non-fat Greek yogurt. It is a powerhouse for protein and can be used as a base for dressings or even as a substitute for sour cream. For milk, unsweetened almond milk or soy milk are usually safer bets than full-fat cow milk. And if he wants cheese, small amounts of a very sharp parmesan or a dry pecorino can give a lot of flavor without needing to use a whole cup of shredded cheddar.

## Corn

That is a good tip. It is about the flavor density versus the fat density. Now, what about the produce section? Obviously, fruits and veggies are low fat, but are there specific ones that help with that bloating feeling?

### Herman

Definitely. Ginger and fennel are often helpful for digestion. I would tell Daniel to buy fresh ginger root every week. You can grate it into stir-fries or steep it for tea. Fennel can be roasted or sliced thin in salads. It has compounds that may help relax the muscles in the digestive tract, which can really help with that feeling of being overly full. Also, papaya and pineapple contain natural enzymes, papain and bromelain, which help break down proteins; some people find them easier on digestion, although strong clinical evidence in this specific context is limited.

### Corn

Okay, so we have grains, lean proteins, non-fat Greek yogurt, and a bunch of produce. What about the flavor hacks? Because if you just steam everything, you are going to get bored in about three days.

### Herman

This is where the pantry staples come in. To make low-fat food taste amazing, you need acid, herbs, and spices. I would stock up on different vinegars: balsamic, apple cider, and rice vinegar. Also, citrus is non-negotiable. Lemons and limes provide that brightness that fat usually provides. For spices, think beyond salt and pepper. Smoked paprika, cumin, coriander, and turmeric. Some research suggests turmeric may support liver health and bile flow, but the evidence in humans is still limited, so think of it as a bonus rather than a magic fix.

### Corn

And Daniel mentioned one great swap already: using salsa instead of hummus. Hummus is healthy, but because of the tahini, it is actually quite high in fat. A fresh pico de gallo or a roasted tomato salsa has almost no fat but tons of punch.

### Herman

Precisely. Another one is white miso paste. It adds a massive hit of savory umami to soups and sauces with very little fat content. And of course, nutritional yeast. If you are missing that cheesy, savory hit, nutritional yeast is a godsend. It often contains added B vitamins and has a nutty, cheesy flavor with very little fat.

## Corn

Alright, let's get into some actual meal ideas. Let's walk through a day of varied, interesting, low-fat eating that won't make Daniel feel like he's on a restrictive medical diet.

## Herman

Let's start with breakfast. I think a lot of people default to eggs, but egg yolks are where most of the fat is. So, if he wants eggs, he should do an egg white omelet. But to make it interesting, load it with sautéed spinach, mushrooms, and onions, and maybe a little bit of that fat-free feta if he can find it. Alternatively, a smoothie bowl. Use that non-fat Greek yogurt as a base, add some frozen berries, a scoop of plant-based protein powder, and maybe a sprinkle of those steel-cut oats for crunch.

## Corn

I like the idea of a savory breakfast too. Maybe some of that farro we talked about, warmed up with some lemon zest, fresh parsley, and a poached egg white on top. It feels very sophisticated but it is very gentle on the system.

## Herman

That sounds great. For lunch, grain bowls are the way to go. You can prep the components on Sunday. Have a big container of quinoa, some roasted sweet potatoes, which are naturally fat-free, and some shredded chicken breast. The key is the dressing. Instead of an oil-based vinaigrette, make a dressing using lemon juice, a little Dijon mustard, some garlic, and a splash of vegetable broth to thin it out. You get all the tang without the oil.

## Corn

You know, back in episode two hundred fifty-two, we talked about the difference between wired and mesh networks in terms of efficiency. I feel like these grain bowls are like the wired connection of nutrition. They are stable, efficient, and they do exactly what you need them to do without any of the interference or lag you get from a heavy, fatty lunch that puts you in a food coma.

### Herman

I love that. No packet loss in a grain bowl! For dinner, we can get even more creative. One of my favorites is a parchment-baked fish, often called fish en papillote. You take a piece of cod or snapper, put it on a piece of parchment paper, and top it with sliced zucchini, cherry tomatoes, capers, and a splash of white wine. Fold it up into a pouch and bake it. The fish steams in its own juices and the aromatics. It is incredibly moist but there is essentially zero added fat.

### Corn

That is a classic technique. What about something with a bit more of a kick? Maybe a low-fat turkey chili?

### Herman

Absolutely. Use extra-lean ground turkey, tons of kidney beans and black beans, canned tomatoes, and a lot of chili powder and cumin. If you want that creamy topping, use a dollop of that non-fat Greek yogurt instead of sour cream. You honestly can't tell the difference once it is mixed in with the spices.

### Corn

And for dessert? Daniel has a sweet tooth.

### Herman

Frozen grapes are a revelation. They get a texture almost like sorbet. Or he could do a baked apple with cinnamon and a tiny bit of maple syrup. If he really wants something decadent, he can make a chocolate mousse using silken tofu. You blend the tofu with cocoa powder and a sweetener like monk fruit or a little honey. It is high in protein and much lower in fat than a cream-based mousse, and it is shockingly good.

### Corn

I have had that tofu mousse, and you are right, it is surprisingly rich-feeling without actually being rich. Now, Herman, one thing Daniel mentioned that I think is a huge hurdle for people is eating out. In a city like Jerusalem, or really anywhere, restaurants love their fats. Butter, oil, cream, it is everywhere. How does someone without a gallbladder navigate a menu without just ordering a plain side salad?

### Herman

This is the hardest part. The first rule is to be your own advocate. You have to ask questions. Is the fish grilled or pan-fried? Most restaurants pan-fry in a lot of butter or oil. You can almost always ask them to grill it dry or with just a tiny bit of spray.

### Corn

What about cuisines? Are some better than others?

### Herman

Definitely. Vietnamese food is often a great choice because it relies heavily on fresh herbs, lime juice, and chili rather than fats. Summer rolls with shrimp and rice paper are a perfect low-fat appetizer. Japanese food is also great, as long as you avoid the tempura and the spicy mayo-heavy rolls. Sashimi and miso soup are excellent options.

### Corn

On the flip side, what should he be wary of?

### Herman

Anything described as crispy, creamed, or sautéed is usually a red flag. Also, be careful with salads. A lot of people think they are being healthy ordering a salad, but a Caesar dressing can have more fat than a cheeseburger. Always ask for the dressing on the side and stick to lemon and vinegar if you can.

### Corn

That is such a common trap. You think you are doing the right thing and then you end up with forty grams of fat in a ranch dressing.

### Herman

Exactly. And in our neighborhood, things like hummus and falafel are tricky. Falafel is deep-fried, so even though it is chickpeas, it is soaking up a lot of oil. If he wants those flavors, he is better off making baked falafel at home using a light spray of olive oil.

### **Corn**

That makes a lot of sense. So, we have the shopping list, the recipes, the restaurant strategy. I want to go back to the bloating for a second. Beyond just what he eats, are there habits that can help the body process things better when the gallbladder is gone?

### **Herman**

Yes, and this is actually just as important as the food itself. Number one is meal frequency. Remember how we talked about the gallbladder being a buffer? If you eat three large meals, you are creating these massive spikes that the liver cannot keep up with. If Daniel switches to five or six smaller meals throughout the day, the constant trickle of bile from the liver is actually enough to handle the smaller amounts of fat.

### **Corn**

So, instead of a big lunch and a big dinner, he should be grazing more?

### **Herman**

Exactly. Keep the volume low at any one time. Also, chew your food thoroughly. Digestion starts in the mouth with salivary enzymes. The more work he does with his teeth, the less work his digestive tract has to do. And finally, stay hydrated throughout the day. Very large volumes of fluid chugged with a meal can be uncomfortable for some people, but normal drinking with meals does not appear to meaningfully dilute digestive enzymes.

### **Corn**

That is really practical advice. It is about the logistics of digestion, not just the chemistry.

### **Herman**

Exactly. It is a system-wide optimization.

## Corn

You know, looking at where we are in early twenty-six, I am also curious about the role of technology in this. We have seen such an explosion in personalized nutrition apps and even smart kitchen tools that can track macronutrients in real-time. Do you think that is something Daniel should look into?

## Herman

I think it could be helpful for the first few weeks just to get a baseline. There are some AI-powered apps that estimate macronutrients from photos of a plate of food, including fat content, though their accuracy can vary and they should be used as rough guides rather than exact measurements. Sometimes we do not realize how much fat is hidden in things we think are healthy. Even an avocado, which is full of healthy fats, might be too much for someone right after gallbladder surgery if they eat a whole one. An app can help him see those patterns. But honestly, once you get the hang of it, your body becomes the best feedback loop. If he feels bloated, something in that last meal was a trigger.

## Corn

It is like the AI benchmarks we discussed in episode two hundred six. Benchmarks are a great starting point, but they do not always reflect real-world performance. You have to see how the system handles the actual workload.

## Herman

That is a perfect comparison. Daniel's internal benchmarks are what matter most.

## Corn

So, let's recap for him. The shopping list should be heavy on complex grains like farro and oats, lean proteins like white fish and chicken breast, non-fat Greek yogurt, and tons of fresh produce, especially ginger and fennel.

## Herman

And don't forget the flavor boosters. Lemons, limes, high-quality vinegars, miso, and a wide array of spices. And for the cooking methods, focus on steaming, poaching, and baking in parchment.

### **Corn**

And the most important lifestyle change is moving toward smaller, more frequent meals to match the liver's constant but low-volume bile production.

### **Herman**

Precisely. It is about working with the body's new architecture rather than trying to force it to act like it still has the old components.

### **Corn**

I think this is going to be really helpful for him. It is easy to feel discouraged when your body doesn't react the way it used to, but with a little bit of intentionality, you can still have an incredible relationship with food.

### **Herman**

Absolutely. Being low fat does not have to mean being low flavor. In many ways, it forces you to become a better cook because you have to rely on technique and seasoning rather than just hiding everything behind butter and cream.

### **Corn**

That is a great way to look at it. It is a culinary challenge, not just a dietary restriction.

### **Herman**

Well said, Corn. I think Daniel is going to have some fun in the kitchen this week. I am looking forward to seeing what he whips up. Hopefully, he will share some of those savory oats with us.

### **Corn**

I will definitely be hovering in the kitchen when he starts experimenting. Well, that about covers our deep dive into the post-gallbladder life and the world of high-flavor, low-fat cooking. It is a topic that affects so many people, and I am glad Daniel brought it up.

**Herman**

Me too. It is these kinds of practical, everyday questions that really get to the heart of what we do here.

**Corn**

Before we wrap up, I want to say a huge thank you to everyone who has been listening and supporting the show. We have been doing this for two hundred ninety episodes now, and the community around My Weird Prompts is just incredible.

**Herman**

It really is. We love hearing from you all. And if you have been enjoying our deep dives into everything from internet infrastructure to digestive health, we would really appreciate it if you could take a moment to leave us a review on your podcast app or on Spotify.

**Corn**

Yeah, it genuinely helps new people find the show. And of course, you can always find us at our website, [myweirdprompts.com](http://myweirdprompts.com). We have the full archive there, an R-S-S feed for subscribers, and a contact form if you want to send us a prompt of your own.

**Herman**

We are always looking for the next rabbit hole to jump down.

**Corn**

Definitely. Well, thanks for listening to My Weird Prompts. I'm Corn.

**Herman**

And I'm Herman Poppleberry.

**Corn**

We'll see you next week. Stay curious!

**Herman**

And eat well! Goodbye, everyone.

**Corn**

So, Herman, do you think we can actually convince Daniel to make that tofu mousse tonight?

**Herman**

If we offer to do the dishes, I think we have a very high chance of success.

**Corn**

Deal. I'm in for the dishes if it means chocolate mousse.

**Herman**

Let's go see if he's in the kitchen.

**Corn**

Alright, catch you later, everyone.

**Herman**

Bye!