

# Bile Duct Cancer: Symptoms



## What are the symptoms of bile duct cancer?

People with bile duct cancer (cholangiocarcinoma) may have any or all of these symptoms. It depends on where the cancer is growing. Symptoms may include:

- **Jaundice.** This is the yellowing of the whites of the eyes and skin. It's caused by high levels of bilirubin in the blood. Bilirubin is a yellow-brown substance in bile. The liver makes bile from the breakdown of red blood cells. Bile travels from the liver through the bile ducts to the intestine. If the bile ducts are blocked by a tumor, bilirubin builds up in the bloodstream. Jaundice is the most common sign of bile duct cancer.
- **Itchy skin.** This is caused by high levels of bilirubin in the skin.
- **Dark brown urine.** This is caused by rising levels of bilirubin in the blood that comes out in the urine.
- **Pain.** Pain may start in the upper right side of the stomach under the ribs. At first, bile duct cancers don't often cause pain. But constant right upper abdominal pain can develop as the cancer grows.

Other symptoms can include:

- Fever or chills
- Pale-colored or greasy stools
- Bloating
- Loss of appetite
- Weight loss

## When to see your healthcare provider

Bile duct cancer is rare. Most times these symptoms are caused by other health problems. But it's important to see a healthcare provider if you have these symptoms. Only a healthcare provider can tell if you have cancer.

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