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Bile Duct Diseases





Your liver makes a digestive juice called bile. Your **gallbladder** [<https://medlineplus.gov/gallbladderdiseases.html>] stores it between meals. When you eat, your gallbladder pushes the bile into tubes called bile ducts. They carry the bile to your small intestine. The bile helps break down fat. It also helps the liver get rid of toxins and wastes.

Different diseases can block the bile ducts and cause a problem with the flow of bile:

- **Gallstones** [<https://medlineplus.gov/gallstones.html>] , which can increase pressure in the gallbladder and cause a gallbladder attack. The pain usually lasts from one to several hours.
- **Cancer** [<https://medlineplus.gov/bileductcancer.html>]
- **Infections**
- **Birth defects**, such as biliary atresia. It is the most common reason for liver transplants in children in the United States.
- **Inflammation**, which can cause scarring. Over time, this can lead to liver failure.

NIH: National Institute of Diabetes and Digestive and Kidney Diseases

Diagnosis and Tests

- **Alkaline Phosphatase** [<https://medlineplus.gov/lab-tests/alkaline-phosphatase/>]  (National Library of Medicine)
Also in Spanish [<https://medlineplus.gov/spanish/pruebas-de-laboratorio/fosfatasa-alcalina/>]
- **Bilirubin Blood Test** [<https://medlineplus.gov/lab-tests/bilirubin-blood-test/>]  (National Library of Medicine)
Also in Spanish [<https://medlineplus.gov/spanish/pruebas-de-laboratorio/examen-de-bilirrubina-en-sangre/>]
- **Endoscopic Retrograde Cholangiopancreatography (ERCP)** [<https://www.niddk.nih.gov/health-information/diagnostic-tests/endoscopic-retrograde-cholangiopancreatography>]  (National Institute of Diabetes and Digestive and Kidney Diseases)
Also in Spanish [<https://www.niddk.nih.gov/health-information/informacion-de-la-salud/pruebas-diagnosticas/colangiopancreatografia-retrograda-endoscopica>]
- **Gamma-glutamyl Transferase (GGT) Test** [<https://medlineplus.gov/lab-tests/gamma-glutamyl-transferase-ggt-test/>]  (National Library of Medicine)
Also in Spanish [<https://medlineplus.gov/spanish/pruebas-de-laboratorio/prueba-de-gamma-glutamyl-transferasa-ggt/>]
- **HIDA Scan** [<https://www.mayoclinic.org/tests-procedures/hida-scan/about/pac-20384701?p=1>]
(Mayo Foundation for Medical Education and Research)
Also in Spanish [<https://www.mayoclinic.org/es/tests-procedures/hida-scan/about/pac-20384701?p=1>]
- **MRCP (MR Cholangiopancreatography)** [<https://www.radiologyinfo.org/en/info/mrcp>]
 (American College of Radiology; Radiological Society of North America)
Also in Spanish [<https://www.radiologyinfo.org/es/info/mrcp>]

Treatments and Therapies

- **Biliary obstruction - series** [https://medlineplus.gov/ency/presentations/100199_1.htm] (Medical Encyclopedia)
Also in Spanish [https://medlineplus.gov/spanish/ency/esp_presentations/100199_1.htm]
- **Endoscopic retrograde cholangio pancreatography (ERCP) - series**
[https://medlineplus.gov/ency/presentations/100180_1.htm] (Medical Encyclopedia)





Related Issues

- Biliary Tract Disorders, Gallbladder Disorders, and Gallstone Pancreatitis [<https://gi.org/topics/biliary-tract-disorders-gallbladder-disorders-and-gallstone-pancreatitis/>] (American College of Gastroenterology)
Also in Spanish [<https://gi.org/patients/recursos-en-espanol/trastornos-del-tracto-biliar-trastornos-de-la-vesicula-biliar-y-pancreatitis-por-calculos-biliares/>]



Specifics

- Bile Reflux [<https://www.mayoclinic.org/diseases-conditions/bile-reflux/symptoms-causes/syc-20370115?p=1>]
(Mayo Foundation for Medical Education and Research)
Also in Spanish [<https://www.mayoclinic.org/es/diseases-conditions/bile-reflux/symptoms-causes/syc-20370115?p=1>]
- Cholestasis [<https://www.merckmanuals.com/home/liver-and-gallbladder-disorders/manifestations-of-liver-disease/cholestasis>] (Merck & Co., Inc.)
- Primary Biliary Cholangitis [<https://www.mayoclinic.org/diseases-conditions/primary-biliary-cholangitis/symptoms-causes/syc-20376874?p=1>] (Mayo Foundation for Medical Education and Research)
Also in Spanish [<https://www.mayoclinic.org/es/diseases-conditions/primary-biliary-cholangitis/symptoms-causes/syc-20376874?p=1>]
- Primary Biliary Cholangitis (Primary Biliary Cirrhosis) [<https://www.niddk.nih.gov/health-information/liver-disease/primary-biliary-cholangitis>]  (National Institute of Diabetes and Digestive and Kidney Diseases)
Also in Spanish [<https://www.niddk.nih.gov/health-information/informacion-de-la-salud/enfermedades-higado/colangitis-biliar-primaria>]
- Primary Sclerosing Cholangitis [<https://www.niddk.nih.gov/health-information/liver-disease/primary-sclerosing-cholangitis>]  (National Institute of Diabetes and Digestive and Kidney Diseases)
Also in Spanish [<https://www.niddk.nih.gov/health-information/informacion-de-la-salud/enfermedades-higado/colangitis-esclerosante-primaria>]
- Primary Sclerosing Cholangitis (PSC) [<https://liverfoundation.org/liver-diseases/autoimmune-liver-diseases/primary-sclerosing-cholangitis-psc/>] (American Liver Foundation)
Also in Spanish [<https://liverfoundation.org/es/liver-diseases/autoimmune-liver-diseases/primary-biliary-cholangitis-pbc/>]
- Sphincter of Oddi Dysfunction [<https://iffgd.org/gi-disorders/upper-gi-disorders/sphincter-of-oddi-dysfunction/>]
(International Foundation for Gastrointestinal Disorders)

Genetics

- Alagille Syndrome [<https://rarediseases.info.nih.gov/diseases/804/alagille-syndrome>]  (Genetic and Rare Diseases Information Center)
Also in Spanish [<https://rarediseases.info.nih.gov/espanol/13396/sindrome-de-alagille>]
- Alagille syndrome: MedlinePlus Genetics [<https://medlineplus.gov/genetics/condition/alagille-syndrome>]  (National Library of Medicine)
- Primary sclerosing cholangitis: MedlinePlus Genetics [<https://medlineplus.gov/genetics/condition/primary-sclerosing-cholangitis>]  (National Library of Medicine)
- Progressive familial intrahepatic cholestasis: MedlinePlus Genetics [<https://medlineplus.gov/genetics/condition/progressive-familial-intrahepatic-cholestasis>]  (National Library of Medicine)

Clinical Trials


- ClinicalTrials.gov: Bile Duct Diseases [<https://clinicaltrials.gov/search?cond=%22Bile+Duct+Diseases%22&aggFilters=status:not%20rec>]  (National Institutes of Health)
- ClinicalTrials.gov: Cholangitis [<https://clinicaltrials.gov/search?cond=%22Cholangitis%22&aggFilters=status:not%20rec>]  (National Institutes of Health)
- ClinicalTrials.gov: Cholestasis [<https://clinicaltrials.gov/search?cond=%22Cholestasis%22&aggFilters=status:not%20rec>]  (National Institutes of Health)
- ClinicalTrials.gov: Liver Cirrhosis, Biliary [<https://clinicaltrials.gov/search?cond=%22Liver+Cirrhosis,+Biliary%22&aggFilters=status:not%20rec>]  (National Institutes of Health)

Journal Articles


References and abstracts from MEDLINE/PubMed (National Library of Medicine)

- Article: Donation after circulatory death; cholangiopathy in the machine age. [https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/40314108]
- Article: Ex-situ normothermic machine perfusion prevents ischemic cholangiopathy after liver transplantation: A... [https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/40158289]
- Article: Activation of S1PR2 on macrophages and the hepatocyte S1PR2/RhoA/ROCK1/MLC2 pathway in... [https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/39854311]
- Bile Duct Diseases -- see more articles [https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/?term=%22Bile+Duct+Diseases%22%5Bmajr%3Anoexp%5D+AND+humans%5Bmh%5D+AND+english%5Bla%5D+AND+%22last+2+Years%22+%5Bedat%5D+NOT+%28letter%5Bpt%5D+OR+case+reports%5Bpt%5D+OR+editorial%5Bpt%5D+OR+comment%5Bpt%5D%29+AND+free+full+text%5Bsb%5D+]


Reference Desk

- Gallbladder and Biliary Tract [https://www.merckmanuals.com/home/liver-and-gallbladder-disorders/biology-of-the-liver-and-gallbladder/gallbladder-and-biliary-tract] (Merck & Co., Inc.)
Also in Spanish [https://www.merckmanuals.com/es-us/hogar/trastornos-del-h%C3%ADgado-y-de-la-ves%C3%ADcula-biliar/biolog%C3%ADa-del-h%C3%ADgado-y-de-la-ves%C3%ADcula-biliar/ves%C3%ADcula-biliar-y-v%C3%ADdas-biliares]
- Your Digestive System and How It Works [https://www.niddk.nih.gov/health-information/digestive-diseases/digestive-system-how-it-works]  (National Institute of Diabetes and Digestive and Kidney Diseases)
Also in Spanish [https://www.niddk.nih.gov/health-information/informacion-de-la-salud/enfermedades-digestivas/aparato-digestivo-funcionamiento]

Find an Expert

- American Liver Foundation [https://liverfoundation.org/]
- ASGE: Find a Doctor [https://www.asge.org/find-a-doctor-results] (American Society for Gastrointestinal Endoscopy)
- Choosing a Cancer Doctor [https://www.cancer.org/cancer/managing-cancer/finding-care/where-to-find-cancer-care/choosing-a-cancer-doctor.html] (American Cancer Society)
Also in Spanish [https://www.cancer.org/es/cancer/como-sobrellevar-el-cancer/encontrar-tratamiento/como-elegir-un-medico-y-un-hospital/como-seleccionar-a-un-medico.html]
- Find a Gastroenterologist (GI Doctor) [https://gi.org/patients/find-a-gastroenterologist/] (American College of Gastroenterology)
- National Institute of Diabetes and Digestive and Kidney Diseases [https://www.niddk.nih.gov] 

Children

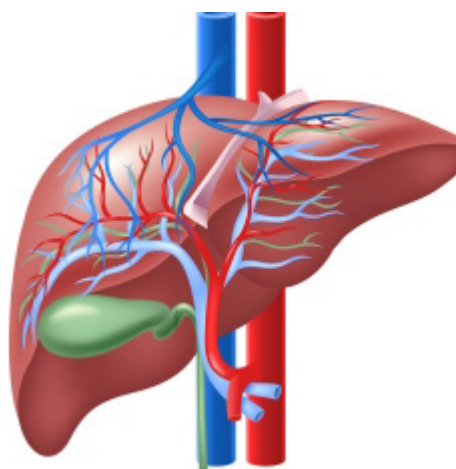
- Biliary Atresia [https://kidshealth.org/en/parents/biliary-atresia.html] (Nemours Foundation)
Also in Spanish [https://kidshealth.org/es/parents/biliary-atresia.html]
- Biliary Atresia [https://www.niddk.nih.gov/health-information/liver-disease/biliary-atresia]  (National Institute of Diabetes and Digestive and Kidney Diseases)

Patient Handouts

- ALP - blood test [https://medlineplus.gov/ency/article/003470.htm] (Medical Encyclopedia)
Also in Spanish [https://medlineplus.gov/spanish/ency/article/003470.htm]
- Bile duct obstruction [https://medlineplus.gov/ency/article/000263.htm] (Medical Encyclopedia)
Also in Spanish [https://medlineplus.gov/spanish/ency/article/000263.htm]
- Bile duct stricture [https://medlineplus.gov/ency/article/000220.htm] (Medical Encyclopedia)
Also in Spanish [https://medlineplus.gov/spanish/ency/article/000220.htm]
- Biliary atresia [https://medlineplus.gov/ency/article/001145.htm] (Medical Encyclopedia)

Also in Spanish [<https://medlineplus.gov/spanish/ency/article/001145.htm>]

- Cholangitis [<https://medlineplus.gov/ency/article/000290.htm>] (Medical Encyclopedia)
Also in Spanish [<https://medlineplus.gov/spanish/ency/article/000290.htm>]
- Cholestasis [<https://medlineplus.gov/ency/article/000215.htm>] (Medical Encyclopedia)
Also in Spanish [<https://medlineplus.gov/spanish/ency/article/000215.htm>]
- ERCP [<https://medlineplus.gov/ency/article/007479.htm>] (Medical Encyclopedia)
Also in Spanish [<https://medlineplus.gov/spanish/ency/article/007479.htm>]
- Gamma-glutamyl transpeptidase (GGT) blood test [<https://medlineplus.gov/ency/article/003458.htm>] (Medical Encyclopedia)
Also in Spanish [<https://medlineplus.gov/spanish/ency/article/003458.htm>]
- Primary biliary cirrhosis [<https://medlineplus.gov/ency/article/000282.htm>] (Medical Encyclopedia)
Also in Spanish [<https://medlineplus.gov/spanish/ency/article/000282.htm>]



MEDICAL ENCYCLOPEDIA

5'-nucleotidase [<https://medlineplus.gov/ency/article/003575.htm>]

Abdominal MRI scan [<https://medlineplus.gov/ency/article/003796.htm>]

ALP - blood test [<https://medlineplus.gov/ency/article/003470.htm>]

ALP isoenzyme test [<https://medlineplus.gov/ency/article/003497.htm>]

Antimitochondrial antibody [<https://medlineplus.gov/ency/article/003529.htm>]

Bile culture [<https://medlineplus.gov/ency/article/003734.htm>]

Bile duct obstruction [<https://medlineplus.gov/ency/article/000263.htm>]

Bile duct stricture [<https://medlineplus.gov/ency/article/000220.htm>]

Biliary atresia [<https://medlineplus.gov/ency/article/001145.htm>]

Biliary obstruction - series [https://medlineplus.gov/ency/presentations/100199_1.htm]

Biopsy - biliary tract [<https://medlineplus.gov/ency/article/003894.htm>]

Cholangitis [<https://medlineplus.gov/ency/article/000290.htm>]

Cholestasis [<https://medlineplus.gov/ency/article/000215.htm>]

Endoscopic retrograde cholangio pancreatography (ERCP) - series
[https://medlineplus.gov/ency/presentations/100180_1.htm]

ERCP [<https://medlineplus.gov/ency/article/007479.htm>]

Fecal fat [<https://medlineplus.gov/ency/article/003588.htm>]

Gallbladder radionuclide scan [<https://medlineplus.gov/ency/article/003826.htm>]

Gamma-glutamyl transpeptidase (GGT) blood test [<https://medlineplus.gov/ency/article/003458.htm>]

Percutaneous transhepatic cholangiogram [<https://medlineplus.gov/ency/article/003820.htm>]

Primary biliary cirrhosis [<https://medlineplus.gov/ency/article/000282.htm>]

Sclerosing cholangitis [<https://medlineplus.gov/ency/article/000285.htm>]

Related Health Topics

Bile Duct Cancer [<https://medlineplus.gov/bileductcancer.html>]

Gallbladder Diseases [<https://medlineplus.gov/gallbladderdiseases.html>]

National Institutes of Health

The primary NIH organization for research on *Bile Duct Diseases* is the National Institute of Diabetes and Digestive and Kidney Diseases [<https://www.niddk.nih.gov>]

Other Languages

Find health information in languages other than English [<https://medlineplus.gov/languages/bileductdiseases.html>] on *Bile Duct Diseases*

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