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National Institutes of Health / National Library of Medicine



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URL of this page: <https://medlineplus.gov/jaundice.html>

Jaundice


Also called: Icterus

Jaundice causes your skin and the whites of your eyes to turn yellow. Too much bilirubin causes jaundice. Bilirubin is a yellow chemical in hemoglobin, the substance that carries oxygen in your red blood cells. As red blood cells break down, your body builds new cells to replace them. The old ones are processed by the liver. If the liver cannot handle the blood cells as they break down, bilirubin builds up in the body and your skin may look yellow.



Many healthy babies have some jaundice during the first week of life. It usually goes away. However, jaundice can happen at any age and may be a sign of a problem. Jaundice can happen for many reasons, such as:

- Blood diseases
- Genetic syndromes
- Liver diseases, such as hepatitis [<https://medlineplus.gov/hepatitis.html>] or cirrhosis [<https://medlineplus.gov/cirrhosis.html>]
- Blockage of bile ducts
- Infections
- Medicines

Start Here

- Recognizing Jaundice: Signs That Your Liver Isn't Delivering [<https://newsinhealth.nih.gov/2022/10/recognizing-jaundice>]  (National Institutes of Health)
Also in Spanish [<https://salud.nih.gov/recursos-de-salud/nih-noticias-de-salud/como-reconocer-la-ictericia>]


Diagnosis and Tests

- 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/>]
- Liver Function Tests [<https://medlineplus.gov/lab-tests/liver-function-tests/>]  (National Library of Medicine)
Also in Spanish [<https://medlineplus.gov/spanish/pruebas-de-laboratorio/pruebas-funcionales-hepaticas/>]

Treatments and Therapies

- Exchange transfusion - series [https://medlineplus.gov/ency/presentations/100018_1.htm] (Medical Encyclopedia)
Also in Spanish [https://medlineplus.gov/spanish/ency/esp_presentations/100018_1.htm]



Related Issues

- What Makes Urine Yellow? The Answer Lies in Your Gut [<https://magazine.medlineplus.gov/article/what-makes-urine-yellow-the-answer-lies-in-your-gut>] 
Also in Spanish [<https://magazine.medlineplus.gov/es/art%C3%ADculo/que-le-da-el-color-amarillo-a-la-orina-la-respuesta-esta-en-el-intestino>]



Specifics

- Gilbert Syndrome [<https://www.mayoclinic.org/diseases-conditions/gilberts-syndrome/symptoms-causes/syc-20372811?p=1>] (Mayo Foundation for Medical Education and Research)
Also in Spanish [<https://www.mayoclinic.org/es/diseases-conditions/gilberts-syndrome/symptoms-causes/syc-20372811?p=1>]

Genetics

- Crigler-Najjar syndrome: MedlinePlus Genetics [<https://medlineplus.gov/genetics/condition/crigler-najjar-syndrome>]  (National Library of Medicine)
- Dubin-Johnson syndrome: MedlinePlus Genetics [<https://medlineplus.gov/genetics/condition/dubin-johnson-syndrome>]  (National Library of Medicine)

Clinical Trials


- ClinicalTrials.gov: Hyperbilirubinemia [<https://clinicaltrials.gov/search?cond=%22Hyperbilirubinemia%22&aggFilters=status:not%20rec>]  (National Institutes of Health)
- ClinicalTrials.gov: Jaundice [<https://clinicaltrials.gov/search?cond=%22Jaundice%22&aggFilters=status:not%20rec>]  (National Institutes of Health)

Journal Articles

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

- Article: Artificial liver support with Cytosorb and continuous veno-venous hemodiafiltration versus advanced... [<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/40759919>]
- Article: OATP1B1/1B3 deficiency exacerbates hyperbilirubinemia in erythropoietic protoporphyria. [<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/40540978>]
- Article: Hyperbilirubinemia does not impair induced liver hypertrophy after portal vein Embolization-a... [<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/40147207>]
- Jaundice -- see more articles [<https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/?term=%22Hyperbilirubinemia%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+>]

Find an Expert

- American Liver Foundation [<https://liverfoundation.org/>]
- National Institute of Diabetes and Digestive and Kidney Diseases [<https://www.niddk.nih.gov>] 

Children

- Jaundice and Breastfeeding [<https://www.cdc.gov/breastfeeding-special-circumstances/hcp/illnesses-conditions/jaundice.html>] (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention)
- Jaundice in Newborns [<https://kidshealth.org/en/parents/jaundice.html>] (Nemours Foundation)
Also in Spanish [<https://kidshealth.org/es/parents/jaundice.html>]

Adults

- Jaundice in Adults [<https://www.merckmanuals.com/home/liver-and-gallbladder-disorders/manifestations-of-liver-disease/jaundice-in-adults>] (Merck & Co., Inc.)

Patient Handouts

- Bilirubin - urine [<https://medlineplus.gov/ency/article/003595.htm>] (Medical Encyclopedia)
Also in Spanish [<https://medlineplus.gov/spanish/ency/article/003595.htm>]
- Bilirubin blood test [<https://medlineplus.gov/ency/article/003479.htm>] (Medical Encyclopedia)
Also in Spanish [<https://medlineplus.gov/spanish/ency/article/003479.htm>]
- Jaundice [<https://medlineplus.gov/ency/article/000210.htm>] (Medical Encyclopedia)
Also in Spanish [<https://medlineplus.gov/spanish/ency/article/000210.htm>]
- Jaundice causes [<https://medlineplus.gov/ency/article/007491.htm>] (Medical Encyclopedia)
Also in Spanish [<https://medlineplus.gov/spanish/ency/article/007491.htm>]
- Newborn jaundice [<https://medlineplus.gov/ency/article/001559.htm>] (Medical Encyclopedia)
Also in Spanish [<https://medlineplus.gov/spanish/ency/article/001559.htm>]
- Newborn jaundice - discharge [<https://medlineplus.gov/ency/patientinstructions/000296.htm>] (Medical Encyclopedia)
Also in Spanish [<https://medlineplus.gov/spanish/ency/patientinstructions/000296.htm>]



MEDICAL ENCYCLOPEDIA

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

Bili lights [<https://medlineplus.gov/ency/article/002394.htm>]

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

Bilirubin - urine [<https://medlineplus.gov/ency/article/003595.htm>]

Bilirubin blood test [<https://medlineplus.gov/ency/article/003479.htm>]

Bilirubin encephalopathy [<https://medlineplus.gov/ency/article/007309.htm>]

Crigler-Najjar syndrome [<https://medlineplus.gov/ency/article/001127.htm>]

Dubin-Johnson syndrome [<https://medlineplus.gov/ency/article/000242.htm>]

Exchange transfusion [<https://medlineplus.gov/ency/article/002923.htm>]

Exchange transfusion - series [https://medlineplus.gov/ency/presentations/100018_1.htm]

Gilbert syndrome [<https://medlineplus.gov/ency/article/000301.htm>]

Jaundice [<https://medlineplus.gov/ency/article/000210.htm>]

Jaundice and breastfeeding [<https://medlineplus.gov/ency/article/000995.htm>]

Jaundice causes [<https://medlineplus.gov/ency/article/007491.htm>]

Newborn jaundice [<https://medlineplus.gov/ency/article/001559.htm>]

Newborn jaundice - discharge [<https://medlineplus.gov/ency/patientinstructions/000296.htm>]

Newborn jaundice - what to ask your doctor [<https://medlineplus.gov/ency/patientinstructions/000257.htm>]

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

Transient familial hyperbilirubinemia [<https://medlineplus.gov/ency/article/001196.htm>]

Related Health Topics

Liver Diseases [<https://medlineplus.gov/liverdiseases.html>]

National Institutes of Health

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

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