



Gallbladder Cancer: The Basics

The gallbladder is an organ that stores bile. Bile is a green-colored liquid made by the liver that helps the body digest fats. Gallbladder cancer is caused by gallbladder cells growing out of control. As the number of cells grows, they form a tumor.

Gallbladder cancer that has spread from the gallbladder to some other part of the body is called [metastatic cancer](#).

Risks

Risks include:

- Having had gallbladder issues in the past like inflammation and gallstones.
- History of Typhoid.
- Obesity.
- Family history of gallbladder cancer.

Signs of Gallbladder Cancer

There are no specific signs of gallbladder cancer. The signs you have can be like the signs of having gallstones:

- Yellowing of the skin and eyes.
- Not feeling hungry.
- Lumps on the right side of the abdomen.
- Nausea and upset stomach.
- Losing weight.

Diagnosis of Gallbladder Cancer

When your healthcare providers think you may have gallbladder cancer, they will do a full exam of your body and ask you questions about your health. They also may order tests like:

- [CT](#).
- [Ultrasound](#) and endoscopic ultrasound.
- [MRI](#).
- Cholangiography which looks at the bile ducts in the gallbladder.
- Blood tests.

Staging Gallbladder Cancer

To guide treatment, gallbladder cancer is "staged." This stage is based on:

- Size and location of the tumor.

- Whether cancer cells are in the lymph nodes.
- Whether cancer cells are in other parts of the body.

Stages range from stage 0 (the cancer is only in the inner layer of the gallbladder) to stage IV (tumors that have spread to other parts of the body, also called metastatic cancer). The stage of gallbladder cancer will guide your treatment plan.

Treatment

Often, these treatments are used:

- Surgery to remove the whole tumor is the only way to cure gallbladder cancer. It can also be used to remove cancer cells that have spread or to lessen pain.
- Radiation, the use of high-energy X-rays to kill cancer cells, can be used after surgery. It can also be used to lessen symptoms caused by the cancer.
- Chemotherapy, the use of medications to kill cancer cells that have gone to other places in the body, can be used with surgery.

This article is a basic guide to gallbladder cancer. You can learn more about your type of gallbladder cancer and treatment by using the links below.

[Surgical Procedures: Surgery and Staging for Gallbladder Cancer](#)

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