



What is cholangiocarcinoma?

Cholangiocarcinoma is a bile duct cancer. It starts in the lining of the ducts inside and leaving the liver. The hepatic ducts and common bile duct drain bile from the liver to the first section of the small intestine. Bile duct cancers are different from cancers of the gallbladder.

Intrahepatic cholangiocarcinoma occurs in the ducts **inside the liver**.

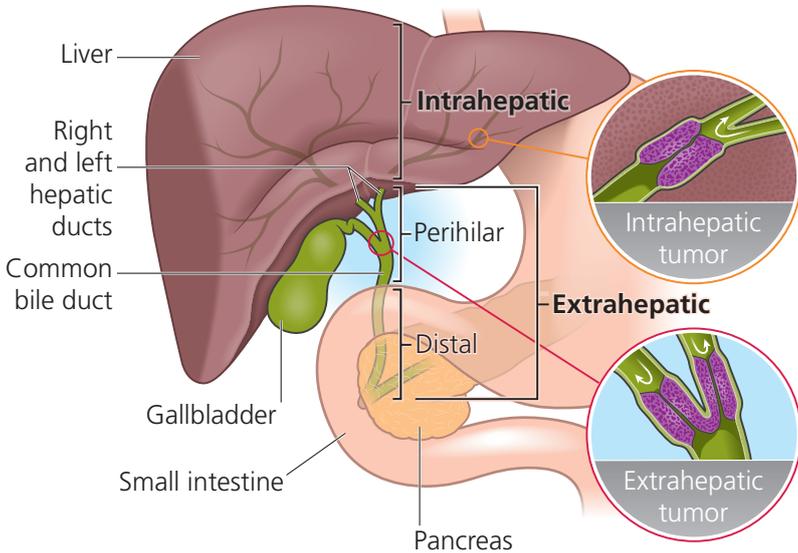
Extrahepatic cholangiocarcinoma occurs in the ducts **outside the liver**. There are two types:

- A **perihilar** tumor develops where the right and left hepatic ducts join and leave the liver.
- A **distal** tumor develops in the common bile duct, which passes through the pancreas and ends in the first section of the small intestine.

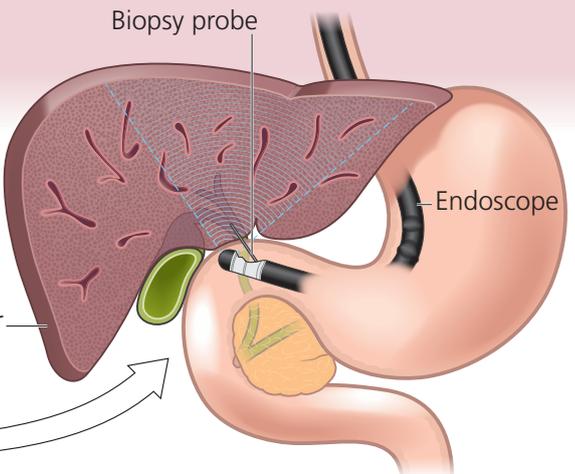
What tests will I need?

Your doctor will ask you about your symptoms and examine you to look for changes in your vital signs, such as blood pressure, heart rate and breathing rate, and changes in your skin and abdomen.

Your doctor will order **blood tests** to check the health of your liver and to detect and measure levels of proteins that are linked to the presence of cancer.

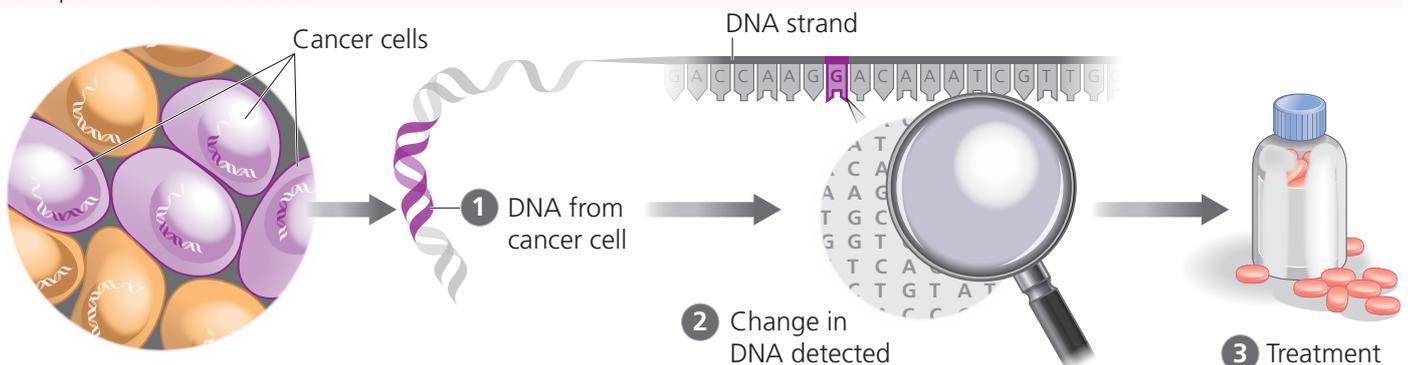


You will need **imaging** of your abdomen to take pictures of your liver and look for cancer in the rest of your body. This is done by **ultrasound** and/or a **CT** or **MRI** scan.



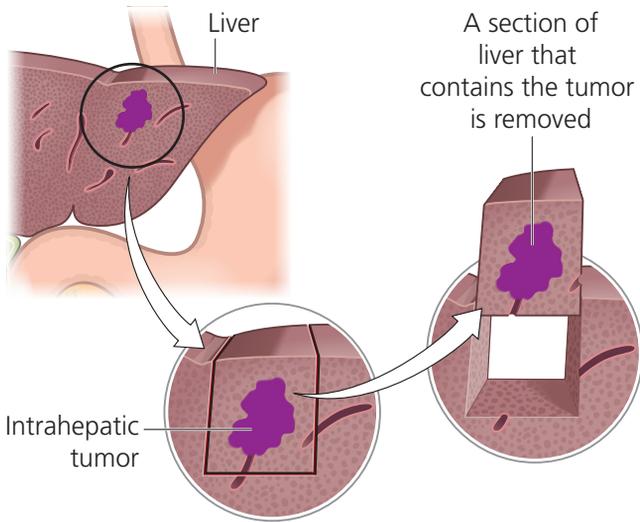
If initial tests suggest a bile duct cancer, an **endoscopic procedure** may be done to look more closely at the tumor, obtain a tissue sample (biopsy) to confirm the diagnosis, and possibly treat any obstruction caused by the tumor.

If your cancer has spread to more than one area within or outside the liver, your doctor should order **molecular profiling** to look for changes in the DNA of your cancer cells or proteins that may have caused the cancer to grow. Molecular profiling is important, as medications or clinical trials are available for cancers with specific changes. Ask your doctor to explain this in more detail.



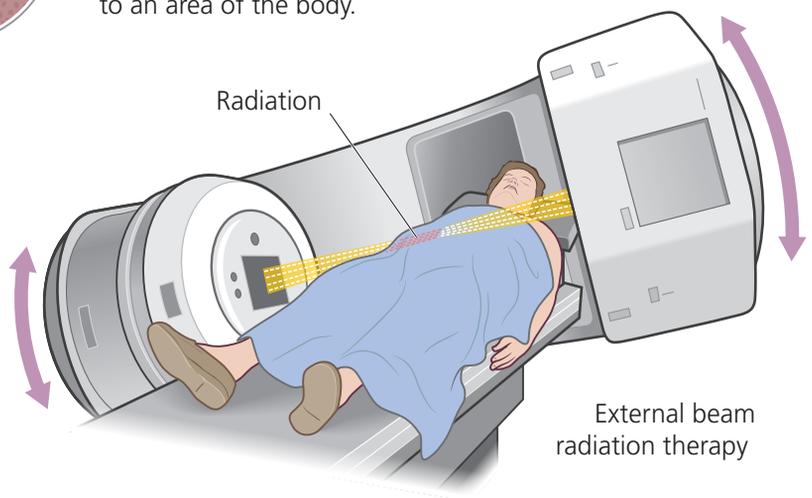
What treatment will I receive?

Treatment options will depend on whether your tumor is in one place or has spread, as well as your general health. Side effects will depend on the type of treatment. There may be a clinical trial you could join to test a new medication or procedure. Ask your doctor for information about possible clinical trials.



If your tumor is in one place, it is called **localized disease** and it may be possible to remove the tumor with **surgery**. For bile duct tumors inside the liver, a piece of your liver and nearby lymph nodes will be removed. For tumors in bile ducts outside the liver, a piece of the bile duct and nearby lymph nodes will be removed and the bile duct will be reconnected.

If surgery is not possible, radiation therapy may be used. **Stereotactic body radiotherapy** delivers concentrated high doses of radiation to the tumor. **External beam radiation therapy** delivers radiation to an area of the body.



After surgery, your doctor may recommend **adjuvant therapy** to lower the risk of the cancer returning. This may include chemotherapy given by vein or by mouth and/or radiation therapy. Your doctor will tell you whether you need adjuvant therapy for your stage of cancer and will explain the risks and benefits.



If you have several tumors in your liver or the cancer has spread to other parts of your body, it is called **advanced or metastatic disease**.

Treatment typically involves one or more chemotherapy drugs given by vein or by mouth.



Other treatments are available for cancers with specific changes found by molecular profiling (see other side of sheet). **Targeted therapy** aims to stop the cancer growth caused by the DNA changes. **Immunotherapy** increases the immune system's ability to detect and attack the cancer.

Questions to ask your doctor(s)

1. Is my tumor in bile ducts inside or outside the liver?
2. Is my cancer localized or advanced?
3. What is the aim of my treatment?
4. What is the standard treatment for the type and stage of my cancer?
5. Is my cancer suitable for molecular profiling or testing to try to identify targets for treatment?
6. Are there any clinical trials I could join?
7. What are the potential short-term and long-term side effects of the treatment being recommended?
8. How will the effects of my treatment be measured or monitored?
9. How often will I see you or other members of the team for tests and checks?