

NCCN QUICK GUIDE™

Gallbladder and Bile Duct Cancers

Hepatobiliary Cancers



This NCCN QUICK GUIDE™ sheet summarizes key points from the complete [NCCN Guidelines for Patients®: Gallbladder and Bile Duct Cancers](#). These guidelines explain which tests and treatments are recommended by experts in cancer. To view and download the guidelines, visit [NCCN.org/patients](https://www.nccn.org/patients) or, to order printed copies, visit Amazon.com.

NCCN Guidelines
for Patients®
Page Number

What are the gallbladder and bile ducts?



The liver, gallbladder, and bile ducts work together to make, store, and secrete bile. Bile is a fluid that helps digest fat in the food you eat. Together, the gallbladder and bile ducts are known as the biliary tract.

[7](#)

What are gallbladder and bile duct cancers?

Cancer can start in the gallbladder or bile ducts inside and outside the liver. Not all gallbladder or bile duct cancers are the same.

[9](#)

What are the treatment groups?

Resectable	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ A tumor that can be removed with surgery is called resectable. Surgery is a primary treatment for gallbladder and bile duct cancers. Primary treatment is the main treatment used to rid the body of cancer. Other treatment might be given before or after surgery.
Unresectable	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ A tumor that cannot be removed with surgery is called unresectable. Treatment might include a clinical trial, systemic therapy, supportive care, palliative radiation therapy, chemoradiation, or arterially directed therapy.
Metastatic	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Metastatic cancer is cancer that has spread to distant sites in the body. Treatment might include a clinical trial, supportive care, palliative radiation therapy, arterially directed therapy, or systemic therapy.



What are my treatment options?

Surgery	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Surgery to remove the tumor is called resection. 	23
Radiation therapy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Radiation therapy uses high-energy radiation from x-rays, gamma rays, protons, and other sources to kill cancer cells and shrink tumors. It can be used to treat pain (palliative). 	28
Chemoradiation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Chemoradiation combines radiation therapy with chemotherapy. 	27
Systemic therapy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ A cancer treatment that affects the whole body is called systemic therapy. 	27
Arterially directed therapy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Arterially directed therapy treats tumors by injecting particles, chemotherapy, or radioactive beads directly into the blood vessels that supply the tumor(s). 	29
Clinical trial	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Clinical trials study how safe and helpful tests and treatments are for people. 	30
Supportive care	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Supportive care is health care that relieves symptoms caused by cancer or its treatment and improves quality of life. Supportive care is always given. 	31

How can I decide between options?

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Don't be shy; ask your doctors questions. They are there to help. ■ Get a second opinion. Even doctors get second opinions! ■ Support groups can be helpful. You can learn a lot from others. ■ Compare the pros and cons of each option. 	84
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