



NCCN QUICK GUIDE™

# Hepatobiliary Cancers

## LIVER, GALLBLADDER, AND BILE DUCT CANCERS

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

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### What is the hepatobiliary system?



The hepatobiliary system is a part of the digestive system. The function of the hepatobiliary system is to help absorb nutrients and help remove waste from the body.	<a href="#">8</a>
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### What are the hepatobiliary cancers?

<b>Liver cancer</b>	There is more than one type of primary liver cancer in adults. The most common type is HCC (hepatocellular carcinoma).	<a href="#">12</a>
<b>Gallbladder cancer</b>	Gallbladder cancer is the most common type of biliary tract cancer. This cancer starts in the gallbladder.	<a href="#">14</a>
<b>Bile duct cancer</b>	Cholangiocarcinoma, also known as bile duct cancer, starts in the bile ducts. This cancer is also called a biliary tract cancer.	<a href="#">16</a>

### How do your doctor and you decide on a treatment plan?

The results from the exam of your body, imaging tests, and in some cases a biopsy will determine your next steps of care. Talking with your doctor about the type of hepatobiliary cancer and cancer stage will help with treatment planning.	<a href="#">24</a>
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### Is surgery often the main treatment for hepatobiliary cancers?

It depends on where the cancer is in the body and the size of the tumor. Surgery may not be an option for some people if the cancer has spread or because of other medical conditions.	<a href="#">29</a>
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## What are the treatment options for HCC?

Surgery or a liver transplant are primary (main) treatment options for people with HCC.	<a href="#">43</a>
Sometimes HCC can't be removed by surgery (partial hepatectomy) for a few reasons. A liver transplant may be possible in some cases.	<a href="#">44</a>
If a liver transplant is not the best option, you may receive ablation, ADT (androgen deprivation therapy), or radiation therapy. Systemic therapy using drug treatment may also be an option. Other options include a clinical trial or best supportive care.	<a href="#">45</a>
Treatment options for HCC that has spread to distant sites in the body or for many tumors throughout the liver include systemic therapy with sorafenib or chemotherapy, a clinical trial, or best supportive care.	<a href="#">46</a>

## What are the treatment options for gallbladder cancer?

For most, the surgery will involve taking out more than the gallbladder. Your doctor may also remove a section or whole lobe of the liver, some lymph nodes, and possibly the common bile duct.	<a href="#">49</a>
Other treatment options may be suggested. They include chemotherapy, chemoradiation, radiation therapy, a clinical trial, best supportive care, or pembrolizumab for MSI-H (microsatellite instability-high) tumors.	
If you have jaundice, your doctor will consider surgery. If surgery is not an option, your doctor may suggest draining the fluid, chemotherapy, chemoradiation, radiation therapy, a clinical trial, best supportive care, or pembrolizumab for MSI-H tumors.	<a href="#">53</a>

## What are the treatment options for bile duct cancers?

<b>Intrahepatic bile duct cancer</b>	First, your treatment team will assess if surgery is an option. If surgery can't be done, options include chemotherapy, a clinical trial, chemoradiation, locoregional therapies, pembrolizumab for MSI-H tumors, or best supportive care.	<a href="#">58</a>
<b>Extrahepatic bile duct cancer</b>	Your treatment team will consider surgery and biliary drainage. If this is not the best first option, you may have chemotherapy, a clinical trial, chemoradiation, radiation therapy, pembrolizumab for MSI-H tumors, or best supportive care.	<a href="#">62</a>

## How do I decide between options?

Ask your doctors many questions. You can also get a second opinion, attend support groups, and compare the benefits and possible risks.	<a href="#">66</a>
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