

Diagnosing Gallbladder Cancer - A Quick Guide



Contents

This is a brief summary of the information on 'Diagnosing gallbladder cancer' from CancerHelp UK. You will find more detailed information on the website.

In this information there are sections on

- Tests for gallbladder cancer
- Further tests for gallbladder cancer
- Questions for your doctor

Tests for gallbladder cancer

Most people begin by seeing their GP. Your GP will ask about your symptoms and your general health. Your doctor will examine you, including feeling your abdomen and the lymph nodes in your neck. Your doctor may refer you to hospital for tests and X-rays or may ask you to see a specialist first. This is usually a gastroenterologist, who is a specialist in diseases of the digestive system.

At the hospital

The specialist will ask about your medical history and symptoms. He or she will examine you, feeling your abdomen for any signs of swelling. Your specialist will check the whites of your eyes and your skin for any yellowing, which is a sign of jaundice. He or she may look at and feel the lymph

glands in your neck and in your groin to see if any are swollen.

Depending on the examination results, you may have some blood tests, a CT scan and an ultrasound scan. Your doctor may also arrange an ERCP (endoscopic retrograde cholangiopancreatography).

Biopsy and fine needle aspiration (fna)

You may have a biopsy. This is the only certain way to tell whether a growth is a cancer or not. But if your doctor is fairly certain from the results of your other tests that you have a cancer, you may not need a biopsy.

Further tests for gallbladder cancer

If tests show you have gallbladder cancer, your specialist will ask you to have further tests to see if the cancer has spread. You may have

- An MRI scan (and MR angiography)
- Endoscopic ultrasound
- Cholangiography
- Angiography
- Laparoscopy



For most of these tests, you will need to visit the outpatients department. You may have to stay in hospital overnight after an angiography. You will also need to stay in hospital overnight for a laparoscopy, which you have under general anaesthetic.

After the tests

You will be asked to come back to the hospital when your test results have come through. This is bound to take a little time, even if only a week or so. You are likely to feel anxious during this time. While you are waiting for results it may help to talk to a close friend or relative about how you are feeling. Or you may want to contact a cancer support group to talk to someone who has been through a similar experience.

What to ask your doctor about gallbladder cancer tests

- What tests will I need to have?
- What are you looking for?
- Will the tests show whether I have cancer?
- Will you know what treatment I will need when you have the results?
- Will the tests show whether my cancer can be operated on?
- Are any of the tests painful?
- Do any of the tests have after effects?
- Can I have these tests as an outpatient?
- Should I bring someone with me when I have these tests?
- How long will the results take?
- Who will give me the test results?

More information

For more information about gallbladder cancer, visit our website <http://cancerhelp.cancerresearchuk.org>

You will find a wide range of detailed, up to date information for people affected by cancer, including a clinical trials database that you can search for trials in the UK. You can view or print the information in a larger size if you need to.

For answers to your questions about cancer call our Cancer Information Nurses on **0808 800 4040**
9am till 5pm Monday to Friday

Adapted from Cancer Research UK's Patient Information Website CancerHelp UK in March 2011. CancerHelp UK is not designed to provide medical advice or professional services and is intended to be for educational use only. The information provided through CancerHelp UK and our nurse team is not a substitute for professional care and should not be used for diagnosing or treating a health problem or disease. If you have, or suspect you may have, a health problem you should consult your doctor. © Cancer Research UK 2011. Cancer Research UK is a registered charity in England and Wales (1089464) and in Scotland (SC041666).