Cholestasis

Any condition in which the flow of bile from the liver stops or slows.

Common
More than 200,000 US cases per year

- Treatable by a medical professional
- Requires a medical diagnosis
- Lab tests or imaging often required

Bile is a digestive fluid. Cholestasis can be caused by a liver infection, gallstones, and cancer.
Symptoms include intense itching, dark urine, and light-colored bowel movements.
Treatment must address the underlying condition and ranges from diet and medications to surgical procedures.

Ages affected

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age Range</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0-2</td>
<td>5%</td>
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<tr>
<td>3-5</td>
<td>10%</td>
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<tr>
<td>6-13</td>
<td>15%</td>
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<td>14-18</td>
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<td>19-40</td>
<td>25%</td>
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<tr>
<td>41-60</td>
<td>30%</td>
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<tr>
<td>60+</td>
<td>35%</td>
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Symptoms

Requires a medical diagnosis
Symptoms include intense itching, dark urine, and light-colored bowel movements.

People may experience:
- Pain areas: in the abdomen
- Gastrointestinal: bloating, fat in stool, nausea, or pale feces
- Whole body: loss of appetite or malaise
- Also common: abdominal cramping from gallstones, dark urine, failure to thrive, itching, or yellow skin and eyes

Treatments

Treatment depends on severity
Treatment must address the underlying condition and ranges from diet and medications to surgical procedures.
Self-care

**Low fat diet:** Reducing intake of high-fat foods such as dairy, oil, and red meat to improve cardiovascular health.

Medications

**Cholesterol medication:** Lowers levels of harmful cholesterol in the blood or increases levels of beneficial cholesterol.
- Ursodiol (Actigall, URSO 250, and URSO Forte)
- Colestyramine (Questran, Questran Light, Colestyramine Light, and Prevalite)

Surgery

**Cholecystectomy:** Surgical removal of the gallbladder.
**Laparoscopic surgery:** Surgery that uses a video camera and thin tubes inserted into small cuts on the body to repair or remove tissue.

Medical procedure

**Biliary stenting**

**Lithotripsy:** Using shock waves to break up kidney stones and gallstones so they pass more easily.

Specialists

**Hepatologist:** Focuses on liver, gallbladder, and biliary tree disorders.
**Interventional radiologist:** Uses image-guided procedures to diagnose and treat diseases.
**General surgeon:** Performs a range of surgeries on the abdomen, skin, breast, and soft tissue.
**Gastroenterologist:** Focuses on the digestive system and its disorders.
**Primary care provider (PCP):** Prevents, diagnoses, and treats diseases.

Consult a doctor for medical advice

Note: The information you see describes what usually happens with a medical condition, but doesn't apply to everyone. This information isn't medical advice, so make sure to contact a healthcare provider if you have a medical problem. If you think you may have a medical emergency, call your doctor or an emergency number immediately.

**Sources:** Mayo Clinic and others. Learn more