



Information for
patients and
carers

Jaundice Information Leaflet

Jaundice

Jaundice is a yellowy tinge to the skin and eyes. It is caused by an obstruction (blockage) in the bile duct which may lead to a build-up of a natural body waste product called bile.

Jaundice can occur because of a disease of the biliary tract which may be cancerous or benign (not cancerous).

Symptoms of Jaundice caused by an obstruction of the bile duct include:

- Dark Urine
- Pale stools
- Itchiness
- Tiredness
- Loss of appetite
- Weight loss

You may suffer from some or all of these symptoms.

Itching

Whilst you remain jaundiced you are likely to feel itchy. This is because there is bile in the tissues of your skin. You will be given medication to help the itching but you may find that this makes you drowsy. Cotton clothes, calamine and warm (not hot) baths with a cup of sodium bicarbonate added to the bath, may help. Stick to non-perfumed products. After bathing, pat dry with a soft towel. Keep finger nails short and try to avoid scratching. Avoid wet wipes which are soaked in alcohol.

Weight Loss

You may experience weight loss and pale stools. This is caused by poor absorption of fat from the digestive tract. You may need to be referred to a dietitian for further advice and support.

Treatment

There are two procedures that can be performed in order to clear the jaundice. These are:

Endoscopic Retrograde Cholangio Pancreatography (ERCP)

You will be given a separate leaflet on ERCP if you are to have this procedure.

This is an endoscope (telescope) which is passed through your mouth into your stomach and on into your duodenum where the bile duct enters. A stent (small tube) is inserted into the bile duct through the endoscope to keep the bile duct open. This allows the bile to drain into the bowel normally. A tissue sample may be taken to aid diagnosis.

This procedure is performed in either the endoscopy unit or X-ray department and you will be given sedation through a small plastic tube (cannula) into the back of your hand or arm to relax you whilst the procedure is carried out.

Percutaneous Trans—Hepatic Cholangiogram (PTC)

This is performed if the ERCP has been unsuccessful because it was technically difficult to insert the stent or if previous surgery has meant that an ERCP will be unsuitable. This procedure is called percutaneous, which means the procedure is carried out through the skin.

A fine plastic drainage tube called a catheter is inserted through the skin and through a tiny incision into the blocked bile duct to allow the bile to drain externally and the stent can then be inserted.

This procedure is performed in the X-ray department by a radiologist (a specially trained doctor) under sedation. A small plastic tube (cannula) is inserted into the back of your hand or arm to give you sedation, which makes you relaxed but not totally asleep. You will also be given some pain relief through the tube in your vein to ensure you are comfortable throughout the procedure. You will need to be an in-patient for the procedure. If you have any allergies or you have previously reacted to similar procedures such as kidney x rays and CT scans, you must let the doctor know.

About Stents

A stent will be inserted to clear the jaundice. Sometimes there is a need to change it because it has become blocked and you would become jaundiced again.

Signs to look out for if the stent is becoming blocked

- Shivery shaky episodes
- Dark urine
- Stools that are getting lighter in colour (e.g-yellow/sand colour).
- Itching
- Jaundice

If any these happen inform your nurse specialist

If at any time you are uncertain or anxious about anything and wish to speak to a member of the team to discuss the issues with you, please ask and this can be arranged.

To speak to your clinical nurse specialist you can call 01772 524788 Monday – Friday 8am – 4pm.

For any urgent matters out of hours, contact your out of hours GP service or urgent care. In an emergency please attend accident & emergency.

Questions about cancer?

We're here to help, the Macmillan Cancer Information & Support Service at Lancashire Teaching Hospitals is open to anyone affected by cancer and is situated at both Chorley Hospital & Royal Preston Hospital.

Contact us on 01772 523709 or cancerinfocentre@lthtr.nhs.uk

Sources of further information

www.lancsteachinghospitals.nhs.uk

www.nhs.uk

www.patient.co.uk

www.accessable.co.uk

All our patient information leaflets are available on our website for patients to access and download:

www.lancsteachinghospitals.nhs.uk/patient-information-leaflets

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If you want to stop smoking you can also contact the Quit Squad Freephone 0800 328 6297.

Please ask if you would like help in understanding this information. This information can be made available in large print and in other languages.

Gujarati:

આ માહિતીને સમજવામાં સહાયતા જોઈતી હોય તો કૃપા કરીને પૂછો. આ માહિતી મોટા છપાણામાં અને અન્ય ભાષામાં ઉપલબ્ધ કરી શકાય છે.

Romanian:

Vă rugăm să întrebați dacă aveți nevoie de ajutor pentru înțelegerea acestor informații. Aceste informații pot fi puse la dispoziție în format mare și în alte limbi.”

Polish:

Poinformuj nas, jeśli potrzebna jest ci pomoc w zrozumieniu tych informacji. Informacje te można również udostępnić dużym drukiem oraz w innych językach

Punjabi:

ਜੇ ਤੁਸੀਂ ਇਹ ਜਾਣਕਾਰੀ ਸਮਝਣ ਵੱਲੋਂ ਮਦਦ ਲੈਣੀ ਚਾਹੋਗੇ ਤਾਂ ਕਰਿਪਾ ਕਰਕੇ ਇਸ ਬਾਰੇ ਪੁੱਛੋ। ਇਹ ਜਾਣਕਾਰੀ ਵੱਡੇ ਪ੍ਰਿੰਟ ਅਤੇ ਹੋਰਨਾਂ ਭਾਸ਼ਾਵਾਂ ਵੱਲੋਂ ਮੁਹੱਈਆ ਕੀਤੀ ਜਾ ਸਕਦੀ ਹੈ।

Urdu:

دو سر ی زبانوں او ر بڑی اگر آپ کو ہی معلومات سمجھنے کے لیے مدد کی ضرورت ہے تو یی چھپا یں ییہ ابی دست ہو یسکت ہے برا ئے مہر یان پو ے یچھہ ی۔ معلومات

Arabic:

مطبوعة بأحرف كبيرة و بلغات إذا كنت تريد مساعدة في فهم هذه المعلومات يُرجى أن تطلب أخرى يمكن تو فسير هذه المعلومات

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Division: Surgery
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