

# Cholangiocarcinoma



PLAY PICMONIC

## Characteristics

### Malignant Carcinoma

[Malignant-man Car-gnome](#)

Cholangiocarcinoma is a malignant tumor that is found in the bile ducts. It has three main localizations: intrahepatic, extrahepatic (i.e., perihilar, or Klatskin tumors), or extrahepatic. The most common type is extrahepatic, and the least common type is the intrahepatic tumor.

### Bile Duct Epithelium

[Bile-duck with E-pick](#)

Cholangiocarcinoma arises from epithelial cells lining the biliary tract.<br>

### Biliary Tract Obstruction

[Beading at Bile-duck with beads](#)

Biliary tract obstruction can occur due to mass effect of cholangiocarcinoma. If not treated, it can lead to life-threatening cholangitis. Signs that indicate obstruction include fatigue, jaundice, pale stools, itching, and dark urine. Infection can be recognized with Charcot's Triad.

## Risk Factors

### Primary Sclerosing Cholangitis

[\(1\) Wand Skull-roses Cola-angel](#)

The etiology of cholangiocarcinoma is not well understood, but it is thought to be caused by long-standing inflammation, such as that seen in primary sclerosing cholangitis and liver fluke infection. This inflammation induces cellular proliferation and hyperplasia, which leads to malignant transformation.

### Liver Fluke Infection

[Tree-toad](#)

Liver fluke infections, such as clonorchiasis and opisthorchiasis, have been associated with cholangiocarcinoma. Other infections that can also be linked with cholangiocarcinoma include HIV and H. pylori.

## Clinical Features

### Weight Loss

[Skinny-with-baggy-pants](#)

One-third of patients with cholangiocarcinoma can present with weight loss.

### Abdominal Pain

[Abdominal Pain](#)

Abdominal pain is commonly seen in the later stages of the disease and is usually characterized by a dull ache on the right upper quadrant.

**Fatigue**

[Sleepy-guy](#)

Fatigue is the most common symptom experienced in the early stages of cholangiocarcinoma.

**Jaundice**

[Jaundice-janitor](#)

The most common symptom experienced by patients with late cholangiocarcinoma is jaundice. It occurs due to cholestasis secondary to obstruction.

**Histology****Infiltrating Neoplastic Glands**

[New-growths Gland](#)

On histology, cholangiocarcinoma characterized by infiltrating neoplastic glands.

**Desmoplastic Stroma**

[Desk-plastic Straw-man](#)

On histology, cholangiocarcinoma is characterized by a desmoplastic stroma. This finding is characterized by an expanded matrix production with the remodeling of connective tissue structures within a tumor, not unlike chronic-active scarring.