

## **Bile Duct Cancer - Stages** [1]

This section has been reviewed and approved by the [Cancer.Net Editorial Board](#) [2], 09/2014

**ON THIS PAGE:** You will learn about how doctors describe a cancer's growth or spread. This is called the stage. To see other pages, use the menu on the side of your screen.

Staging is a way of describing where the cancer is located, if or where it has spread, and whether it is affecting other parts of the body. Doctors use diagnostic tests to find out the cancer's stage, so staging may not be complete until all the tests are finished. Knowing the stage helps the doctor decide which kind of treatment is best and can help predict a patient's prognosis, which is the chance of recovery. There are different stage descriptions for different types of cancer.

The TNM classification used to stage other types of cancers into Stages I through IV (one through four) is medically complex for bile duct cancer. The headings listed below provide a simpler way to describe the stages of bile duct cancer. By classifying each cancer into one of these categories, the health care team can then plan the best treatment strategy.

**Local.** This type of bile duct cancer is located only within the bile duct and can be removed surgically. There is no evidence of any spread to areas outside of the bile duct.

**Locally advanced.** This type is located only in the area around the bile duct, but it does affect nearby organs, arteries, and/or veins. There is no evidence of spread to any distant parts of the body.

**Metastatic.** The tumor has spread beyond the area of the bile duct to reach distant parts of the body. It is unlikely that surgery can remove all of the cancer.

**Recurrent.** Recurrent cancer is cancer that has come back after treatment. If there is a

recurrence, the cancer may need to be staged again (called re-staging) using the system above.

*Information about the cancer's stage will help the doctor recommend a treatment plan. The next section helps explain the treatment options for this type of cancer. Use the menu on the side of your screen to select Treatment Options, or you can select another section, to continue reading this guide.*

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**Links**

[1] <http://www.cancer.net/cancer-types/bile-duct-cancer/stages>

[2] <http://www.cancer.net/about-us>