

Gilbert's syndrome

Gilbert's syndrome is a common liver condition. It can run in families and is considered to be harmless.

Causes

Gilbert's syndrome is caused by a higher than normal level of bilirubin in the blood. Bilirubin is made when the liver breaks down old blood cells.

Gilbert's syndrome is caused by a problem with one of the genes involved in breaking down bilirubin.

Symptoms

Many people with Gilbert's syndrome have no symptoms. The most common symptom is jaundice that goes away after a few days. Jaundice is a yellow colour to your eyes or skin. Some people have symptoms linked to the condition, such as tummy issues caused by gallstones.

Tests and diagnosis

Gilbert's syndrome is diagnosed by looking at the bilirubin level and ruling out other possible conditions. This is done using blood tests and sometimes scans. Gilbert's syndrome will be diagnosed if all of these apply:

- a liver blood test found a higher than normal amount of bilirubin
- other test results were all normal
- there is jaundice that comes and goes
- there are no symptoms of other liver conditions

Gilbert's syndrome and gallstones

Gallstones are a common condition. They are treatable but can be very painful and unfortunately there is often a long waiting list for treatment. There is some evidence that people with Gilbert's syndrome may have a higher risk of developing gallstones. So it is a good idea to be aware of the symptoms so you can seek help early.

Find out more about gallstones at [liveruk.org/gallstones](https://www.liveruk.org/gallstones)



Liver UK is the new name
for the British Liver Trust
and Children's Liver
Disease Foundation

www.liveruk.org
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Jaundice triggers

Some people find that physical or emotional stress can increase the chance of them getting jaundice. For example:

- Going on a very low calorie diet Fasting, for example during Ramadan
- Not drinking enough water (dehydration)
- Pregnancy
- Having a period (menstruation)
- Having surgery
- Infectious diseases like flu
- Not getting enough sleep Heavy exercise or other physical exertion

Jaundice caused by Gilbert's syndrome is short lived and should go away by itself in a few days. It might be possible to work out what triggers the jaundice and avoid it. **If the jaundice is worse than usual, or does not go away after a few days, talk to a GP or call NHS 111.**

Is Gilbert's syndrome harmless?

Gilbert's syndrome is considered harmless. For most people it causes no problems other than occasional jaundice. However, this is not the experience of some people who have been diagnosed with it.

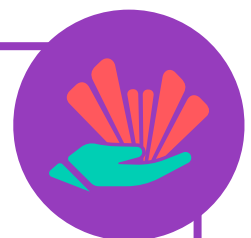
If someone has severe symptoms they should not be expected to just put up with them because they have been diagnosed with Gilbert's syndrome.

Doctors should do tests to see if there could be another condition as well. If they are not sure about the diagnosis, they should make a referral to a specialist.

How we can help

The Liver UK support team are here for you and for your family and friends. Find out more more at liveruk.org/support

Call our nurse-led helpline to talk to one of our team: **0800 652 7330**



For more information about Gilbert's syndrome and links to support visit liveruk.org/gilberts-syndrome or scan the QR code.

