

Survival Rates for Bile Duct Cancer

This represents the most up-to-date survival rate information for bile duct cancer.

Survival rates can give you an idea of what percentage of people with the same type and stage of cancer are still alive a certain amount of time (usually 5 years) after they were diagnosed. This information can't tell you how long you will live, but it may help give you a better understanding of how likely it is that your treatment will be successful.

Keep in mind that survival rates are estimates and are often based on previous outcomes of large numbers of people who had a specific cancer, but they can't predict what will happen in any particular person's case.

These statistics can be confusing and may lead you to have more questions. Ask your cancer care team how these numbers might apply to you.

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What is a 5-year relative survival rate?

A **relative survival rate** compares people with the same type and stage of cancer to people in the overall population.

For example, if the **5-year relative survival rate** for a specific stage of bile duct cancer (cholangiocarcinoma) is 30%, it means people who have that cancer are, on average, about 30% as likely as people who don't have that cancer to live for at least 5 years after being diagnosed.

Where do these numbers come from?

The American Cancer Society relies on information from the Surveillance, Epidemiology, and End Results (SEER) database to provide survival statistics for different types of cancer. This database is maintained by the National Cancer Institute (NCI).

The SEER database tracks 5-year relative survival rates for bile duct cancer in the United States, based on how far the cancer has spread. However, the database does not group cancers by [AJCC TNM stages](#) (stage 1, stage 2, stage 3, etc.). Instead, it groups cancers into localized, regional, and distant stages:

- **Localized:** There is no sign that the cancer has spread outside of the bile ducts.
- **Regional:** The cancer has spread outside the bile ducts to nearby structures or lymph nodes.
- **Distant:** The cancer has spread to distant parts of the body, such as the lungs.

5-year relative survival rates for bile duct cancer

These numbers (which are the most recent available) are based on people diagnosed with cancers of the bile duct between 2012 and 2018. They are divided into intrahepatic and extrahepatic bile duct cancers.

Intrahepatic bile duct cancers (those starting within the liver)

SEER* stage	5-year relative survival rate
Localized	23%
Regional	9%
Distant	3%
All SEER stages combined	9%

Extrahepatic bile duct cancers (those starting outside the liver)

This includes both perihilar and distal bile duct cancers.

SEER stage	5-year relative survival rate
Localized	18%
Regional	18%
Distant	2%
All SEER stages combined	11%

*SEER= Surveillance, Epidemiology, and End Results

Understanding the numbers

- **These numbers apply only to the stage of the cancer when it is first diagnosed.** They do not apply later on if the cancer grows, spreads, or comes back after treatment.
- **These numbers don't take everything into account.** Survival rates are grouped based on how far the cancer has spread. But other factors such as your age, your overall health, and how well the cancer responds to treatment, can also affect your outlook.
- **People now being diagnosed with bile duct cancer may have a better outlook than these numbers show.** Treatments improve over time, and these numbers are based on people who were diagnosed and treated at least five years earlier.

Written by [References](#)



Developed by the [American Cancer Society medical and editorial content team](#) with medical review and contribution by the American Society of Clinical Oncology (ASCO).

SEER*Explorer: An interactive website for SEER cancer statistics [Internet]. Surveillance Research Program, National Cancer Institute. Accessed at <https://seer.cancer.gov/explorer/> on February 23, 2023.

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