

# Hepatobiliary and pancreatic investigations

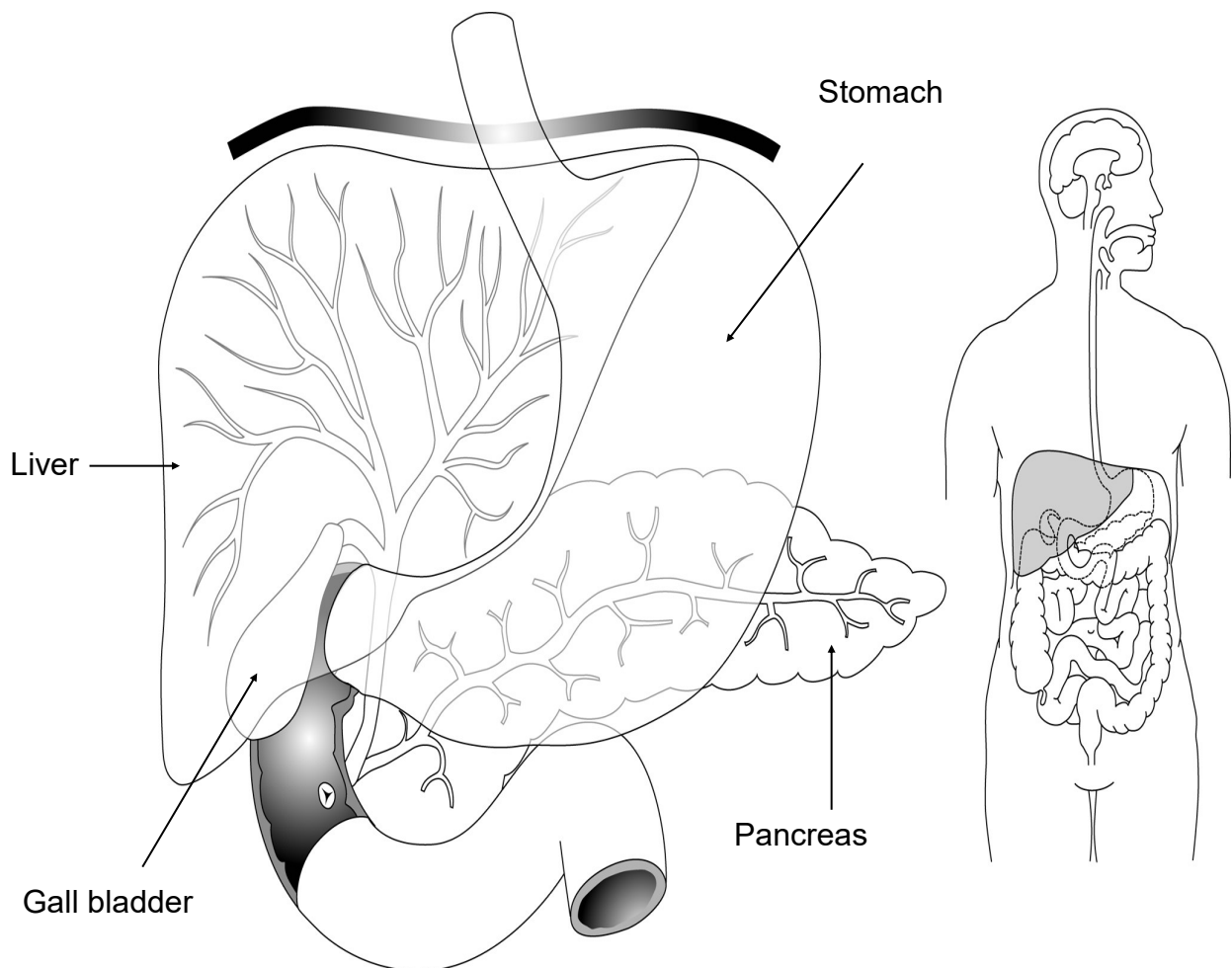
Information for Patients

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Hepatobiliary & Pancreatic Services

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## Introduction

You have been referred to the Hepatobiliary Unit. We specialise in procedures and operations involving the liver, pancreas, bile duct and gall bladder.

## The hepatobiliary system

Your liver is situated on the right hand side of your body, tucked under the lower ribs. It is the body's largest organ. Its functions include filtering substances from the body, helping with blood clotting, producing bile and regulating body fats and sugars.

Your pancreas is a gland situated behind the stomach, and is attached to the back of the abdominal cavity. The pancreas has two important functions. It releases substances to help you digest food, and it produces insulin. Insulin is a hormone that enables the body to use and balance the sugar in the blood.

The biliary tree refers to the gall bladder and its connections, which let bile produced in the liver pass to the duodenum.

## Investigations

When you attend clinic, you will need to have some investigations done, so that your doctor can make a diagnosis for you. These might take the form of a simple blood test and/or an ultrasound or more in-depth radiography tests.

### Blood tests

These may be to check for:

- **Anaemia** - a low number of red blood cells in your blood
- **Diabetes** - a lack of insulin in your body. This means that it is unable to convert sugars into energy
- **Liver function** - to assess how well your liver is working
- **"Tumour markers"** - to check for chemical activity which might indicate a tumour
- **Urea and electrolyte levels** - to measure the levels of some of the salts in your blood, and give your doctor information about your kidney function.

### Radiography tests

#### • Ultrasound

This test may be done to find the cause of your abdominal pain or to examine your liver or pancreas. The test is done within the X-ray Department, using harmless sound waves. You will be asked to lie down on the ultrasound table. A special gel will be put on your skin and the ultrasound probe will be passed over this area. This enables images of your liver, pancreas and biliary system to be seen on a television screen.

#### • CT (Computed Tomography) Scan

This is an X-ray examination that gives more information than a normal X-ray. It produces detailed images of your organs and blood vessels. You will be asked to lie still on the scan table, while a circular scanner (a bit like a large doughnut) moves up and down the table around you.

## Radiography tests (continued)

- **MRI (Magnetic Resonance Imaging) Scan**

MRI is a test that uses a powerful magnet and a computer to produce detailed images of your internal organs. The MRI scanner does not use X-rays. If you think that you have anything metal inside your body, such as a pacemaker, you must tell a member of staff before the scan.

- **MRCP (Magnetic Resonance Cholangiopancreatography)**

This test is similar to the MRI and gives a detailed scan of your bile duct and pancreas. It is often done before, and sometimes instead of, an ERCP.

- **ERCP (Endoscopic Retrograde Cholangiopancreatography)**

This is a test done in the Endoscopy Unit or/Digestive Diseases Centre. It is usually performed under sedation. The endoscope (a long thin flexible tube-like camera) is passed carefully through your mouth, down into the duodenum. A small, fine tube is introduced into the bile duct and dye is injected. This test allows detailed X-ray pictures to be taken of the biliary tree. Gall stones can be removed and, if there is narrowing of the tubes, a stent (a small tube about the size of a biro refill) can be put in place to let bile drain.

**If you are to have any of the above radiology or endoscopy tests, further information will be sent to you with your appointment letter.**

## Planning your care

### The Multidisciplinary Team (MDT)

While planning your care, your doctor will wish to discuss your medical problem at a weekly meeting with other specialists.

This means that your planned treatment is a joint decision by your doctor and several other specialists. Members of the MDT include:

- hepatobiliary and pancreatic surgeons (doctors who specialise in operations involving the liver, pancreas and biliary tree)
- a radiologist (a specialised X-ray doctor)
- a pathologist (a doctor who studies body tissues)
- an oncologist (a specialist cancer doctor)
- doctors and nurses from the palliative care team
- clinical nurse specialists.

## Test results

You will usually be given an appointment to see your consultant, or a member of his medical staff, to receive the results of the tests you have had.

## This image shows a blank sheet of white paper with horizontal ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the paper.

ਜੇ ਤੁਸੀਂ ਇਹ ਜਾਣਕਾਰੀ ਕਿਸੇ ਹੋਰ ਭਾਸ਼ਾ ਵਿਚ ਚਾਹੁੰਦੇ ਹੋ, ਤਾਂ ਕਿਰਪਾ ਕਰਕੇ ਹੇਠਾਂ ਦਿੱਤੇ ਗਏ ਨੰਬਰ 'ਤੇ ਟੈਲੀਫੋਨ ਕਰੋ।  
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