



Gilbert Syndrome

Why is the liver important?

The liver is the second largest organ in your body and is located under your rib cage on the right side. It weighs about three pounds and is shaped like a football that is flat on one side.

The liver performs many jobs in your body. It processes what you eat and drink into energy and nutrients your body can use. The liver also removes harmful substances from your blood.

What is Gilbert Syndrome?

Gilbert Syndrome is a mild genetic disorder in which the liver does not properly process a substance called bilirubin. Bilirubin is made by the break down of red blood cells.

Gilbert Syndrome affects three to seven percent of people in the United States. Gilbert Syndrome is more common in men than women.

What causes Gilbert Syndrome?

Gilbert Syndrome is caused by the body having lower amounts of a liver enzyme that breaks down bilirubin. As a result, extra amounts of bilirubin build up in the blood.

What are the symptoms of Gilbert Syndrome?

People with Gilbert Syndrome usually do not have symptoms. Gilbert Syndrome sometimes causes the liver to make too much bilirubin that the person becomes jaundiced (yellowing of eyes and skin).

Certain things can further increase the level of bilirubin in the bodies of those with Gilbert Syndrome:

- Being ill
- Menstruating
- Fasting or skipping meals
- Exercising too much

What are the complications of Gilbert Syndrome?

Complications of Gilbert Syndrome may include certain medications causing side effects in people who have Gilbert Syndrome. Talk to a doctor before taking any new medications.

How is Gilbert Syndrome diagnosed?

Doctors usually diagnose Gilbert Syndrome after reviewing blood test results and ruling out other liver diseases. In people with Gilbert Syndrome, liver function levels will usually be in normal ranges except for the bilirubin level. However, the level of bilirubin in the blood may change frequently and a doctor may repeat the blood tests a few times.

How is Gilbert Syndrome treated?

Since Gilbert Syndrome is a mild and manageable condition, it does not need treatment.