



About Cholestasis

What is cholestasis?

Cholestasis (say *kol-lee-stay-sis*) is best described as severe itching all over your body.

About the itching:

- can be worse on your palms and soles of your feet
- can be worse at night
- **no** obvious rash

What causes this problem?

This results from problems with how bile (a digestive fluid) flows from your liver to your gallbladder and digestive tract. The itching comes from a build-up of bile in your body.

The cause is not clear. It might be genetic (common in some families). Or pregnancy hormones might somehow slow the normal flow of bile.

How does too much bile affect my baby?

The concern with too much bile is that it could cause:

- your baby to have a bowel movement (poop) before birth
- you to go into labour too early

Some studies show that too much bile might harm babies who are born at term or later.

What checks and treatments can you expect?

We will ask you to count and keep track of your baby's movements each day.

Also you can expect:

- non-stress test(s) once a week
- blood tests to check your liver function and bile levels
(**Note:** You must not eat for at least 10 hours before these tests.)
- start a medication called 'Ursodiol'
- Medications to start labour early (between 37 and 38 weeks)
- electronic monitoring of your baby during your labour
- an appointment with a pregnancy specialist doctor, if needed

What can you do to care for yourself at home?

Take naps in the daytime to make up for lost sleep at night.

Try natural ways to help with the itching:

- Place your feet and hands in cool water or use a cool pack.
- Put unscented lotion on your skin.
- Wear loose-fitting cotton clothing.

Make an appointment to see your doctor when:

- Your itching gets worse
- Your skin or the whites of your eyes turn yellow

Call then go to the maternity unit when:

- Your baby moves less than 6 times in 2 hours
- You have regular contractions every 10 minutes or less

Notes:

(Maternity Unit contact information)

www.fraserhealth.ca

This information does not replace the advice given to you by your healthcare provider.