ABOUT THE LIVER

The liver is the largest solid organ in the body. It is essential in keeping the body functioning properly. It removes poisons from the blood and produces proteins that regulate the clotting of blood and control of infections. and the liver produces bile to help absorb fats, fat-soluble vitamins, and other fat-soluble nutrients.

Signs of Infant Liver Disease

In a baby there can be one or more signs that the liver is not working properly. The skin and eyes may be jaundiced (appear yellow). Jaundice is caused by a buildup of bilirubin in the blood. The abdomen may look swollen or the surface blood vessels bigger. The urine may be dark yellow or brown. The stools are often grey or white instead of green or yellow. There may also be bleeding or easy bruising. The blood might contain higher than normal levels of liver enzymes that can be detected on routine blood test analyses. The liver may feel large or look large on an x-ray.

Jaundice, if it occurs in the first few days after birth and then goes away by about a week of age, is not harmful; this is called ‘physiologic jaundice.’ Jaundice that remains or increases after a week from birth, or 14 days for preterm infants, may be due to a build-up of bile in the liver (cholestasis) and requires further testing.
The Biliary Tract

Bile is a fluid made in and released by the liver. It flows from the liver, through the bile ducts and into the small intestine where it is needed for the digestion of fats. The gallbladder is an organ which stores bile produced by the liver. Eating signals the gallbladder to send bile down the bile ducts to the small intestine.