**Jaundice: definition and types**

**Jaundice, also known as icterus, is a term used to describe a yellowish coiour of the skin and sclerae (the white part of the eye) that is caused by hyperbilirubinemia (an excess of bilirubin in the blood). Body fluids may also be yellow.**

**Bilirubin is a waste product that remains in the bloodstream after the iron is removed from the hemoglobin, which is released from the degradation of erythrocytes .**

**Bilirubin that is circulating freely in the blood is called unconjugated bilirubin. One of the liver's functions is to filter out waste, such as bilirubin, from the blood. Once it is in the liver, other chemicals latch on to the bilirubin, creating a substance called conjugated bilirubin, which is secreted in bile.**

**Total bilirubin: 0.3 to 1.9 mg/dL,if more than 2.5-3 mg/dL**

**Types of jaundice**

**There are three main types of jaundice:**

* **Hepatocellular jaundice - a type of jaundice that occurs as a result of liver disease or injury.like hepatitis A, B, C, D,E or drugs like INH. Characterized by dark colour urine,hepatomegaly and increased direct bilirubinaemia.**
* **Hemolytic jaundice - a type of jaundice that occurs as a result of hemolysis (breakdown of erythrocytes - red blood cells) leading to an increase in production of bilirubin and anaemia.,spleenomegaly and increase indirect bilirubinaemia.**
* **Obstructive jaundice - a type of jaundice that occurs as a result of an obstruction in the bile duct which prevents bilirubin from leaving the liver.due to stone or cancer characterized by direct and indirect hyperbilirubinaemia,clay coloured stool.**