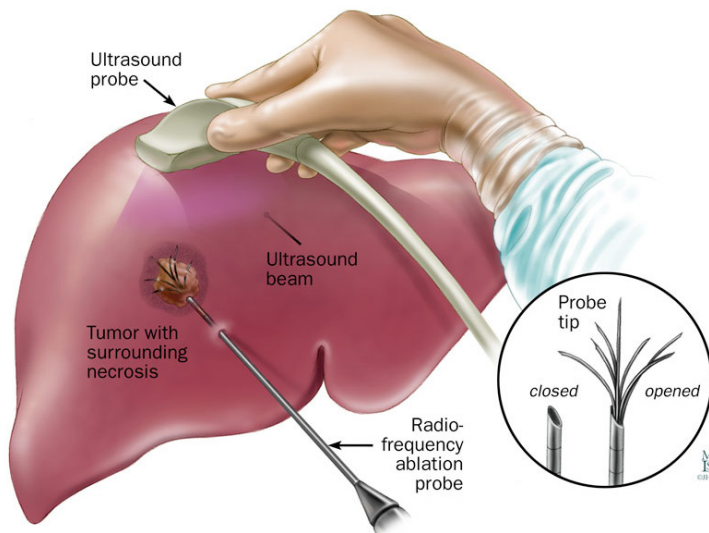


# Thermal Liver Ablation

## for Liver Cancer

### WHAT IS THERMAL LIVER ABLATION?

Thermal liver ablation is a procedure that uses heat, through microwave or radiofrequency energy, to destroy cancer cells in the liver. This procedure is usually used for smaller tumors and has few side effects. In some cases, it is possible to cure the cancer with this treatment. Only a small percentage of liver cancer patients meet the requirements to have liver ablation.



### WHAT HAPPENS DURING A LIVER ABLATION PROCEDURE?

The doctor in charge of this procedure is an interventional radiologist (IR). A small needle is inserted into the liver in the center of the cancer. Using ultrasound imaging and sometimes a CT scanner, the needle is guided to the target area and sends heat to destroy the tumor.

### HOW DO RADIOFREQUENCY AND MICROWAVE ABLATION DESTROY CANCER CELLS?

Radiofrequency ablation (RFA) destroys tumors by using heat from an electrical current created by radio waves. Microwave ablation uses similar technology with microwave energy to destroy cancer tissue. Normal, healthy tissues in the treated area may also be destroyed or damaged to make sure that the entire tumor is treated. RFA or microwave ablation can be used with surgery, or instead of surgery.

## LIVER ABLATION TREATMENT TIMELINE

Day before  
your  
procedure



### DO:

- Arrange for someone to drive you home after your procedure



### DO NOT:

- Do not eat or drink anything after midnight on the night before your treatment. If you need to take medications, you may take a small sip of water to swallow your pill(s).

Day of  
the ablation  
procedure

- Arrive one hour before your appointment to get ready for treatment.
- You will need to change in to a hospital gown.
- You will be given an IV so that you can receive drugs to make you comfortable and sleepy during treatment.

During  
the ablation  
procedure

- You must stay very still during treatment.
- Your heart activity and blood pressure will be monitored the entire time.
- You may feel some pain or discomfort while the tumor is being destroyed. Pain medication can help if this happens.

## After the ablation procedure

- You will rest for at least 4 hours before you are allowed to leave the hospital.
- Your heart activity and blood pressure will continue to be monitored to make sure there are no problems.
- Most patients are able to leave the hospital on the same day as their treatment.
- You will receive a 'Post-Ablation Instructions' pamphlet with more details from your IR team.

## Follow-up care

- You will have a CT scan 4 weeks after your treatment and then meet with the doctor who gave you the treatment to review the results.
- If you do not need further follow-up after this meeting, your previous doctors will take over your care.



*CT scanner*



## WHAT SIDE EFFECTS CAN I EXPECT?

Some of the more common side effects that you may experience are listed below. Every patient is different and you may not experience any or all of the side effects below. If you have questions or concerns, ask your health care team.



**If you experience SEVERE bleeding, bruising or pain at the incision site, shortness of breath, ongoing fever, sweating, lightheadedness, or if your legs become cold or numb, go to the Emergency Room and tell the staff that you have had liver ablation.**

Side effect	What to expect	What to do
Post-ablation syndrome	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pain</li> <li>• Fever</li> <li>• Fatigue</li> <li>• Nausea/vomiting</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• You can treat these symptoms like you would the regular flu. Drink plenty of fluids and get lots of rest.</li> <li>• Take Advil or Tylenol for pain/fever as needed.</li> <li>• You will be prescribed anti-nausea medications which can help.</li> </ul>
Minor bleeding	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A small amount of bleeding may happen at the incision site. Bruising may happen as well. Both of these things are normal.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tell your doctor.</li> <li>• Your doctor will check your incision site or offer treatment if needed.</li> </ul>
Pain	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A little bit of pain at the incision site or in the upper abdomen is normal and may last for 2-3 days after treatment.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tell your doctor.</li> <li>• Your doctor will be able to give you pain medication to help.</li> </ul>

## FOR MORE INFORMATION ON YOUR CANCER TREATMENT

If your health care team recommends thermal ablation as a treatment, you will receive additional information including more details about what happens during and after the procedure, side effects, and what you can expect for follow-up care. Your health care team is here to help, ask questions to help you understand.



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