

Your Journey Through Liver Cancer

A Guide For Patients and Caregivers

Finding out you have cancer in the liver can be scary and confusing. Your health care team will support you along the way. Recently, there has been a lot of progress in the ability to manage liver tumors. This means better control of cancer symptoms and a better quality of life and/or length of life.



INFORMATION DESIGNED FOR YOU, WITH PATIENTS

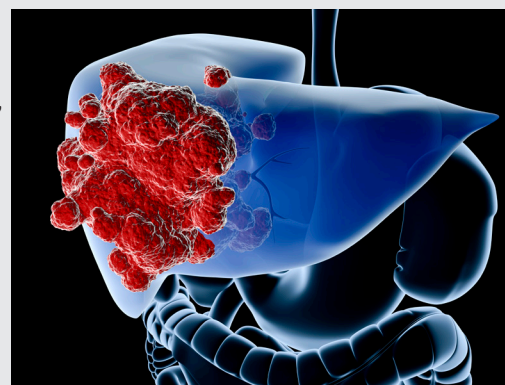


Patient information materials have been developed by fellow patients, volunteers, doctors, nurses and other allied health professionals (radiation therapists, social workers and dietitians). These resources will help you understand your diagnosis, treatment options and how the cancer will impact you and your family. Once you and your health care team have decided on a treatment option, you will receive more detailed information.

WHAT IS LIVER CANCER?

A healthy cell is meant to grow, work, reproduce, and die. Sometimes cells become damaged. When this happens, they may lose control of their normal functions. When these damaged cells reproduce, cancer cells can form and develop into a tumor that can be harmful.

When liver cancer starts directly in the liver, it is called hepatocellular carcinoma, or HCC. When the cancer has spread from cancers that started in other organs, it is called metastatic cancer.



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HOW IS LIVER CANCER TREATED?

There are many ways to treat liver cancer and more than one type of treatment can be used.

A team of doctors will work together to decide which treatment pathway is right for you. In addition to your overall health, some factors that influence these decisions include:

- location of the tumour in the liver
- the size and number of the tumor(s)
- whether the tumor started in the liver or spread from cancer elsewhere in the body

Although surgery offers the best chance of a cure, many patients cannot have surgery. In these cases, you may see a radiation oncologist, a medical oncologist, or an interventional radiologist. These doctors will help to determine if radiation therapy, drug therapy or other procedures may be the right treatment option(s) for you.

CLINICAL TRIALS

Scientists and doctors develop new medications and treatment techniques and try to improve existing ones. The goal of cancer research is to make cancer patients live longer. Medications and treatment techniques can be tested in a clinical trial. If a new option is available to you, your health care team will ask you if you would like to participate in a clinical trial.





HEALTHCARE TEAM MEMBERS WHO MAY BE INVOLVED IN YOUR TREATMENT

Radiation Therapy:

- **Radiation Oncologist:** a doctor who specializes in using high energy x-rays to treat cancer.
- **Radiation Therapist:** an allied health professional who plans and administers your radiation treatment.
- **Medical Physicist:** a scientist who makes sure that your treatment is delivered accurately and safely.

Medical Oncology:

- **Medical Oncologist:** a doctor who specializes in using medications to treat cancer.
- **Oncology Nurse:** a nurse who has received special training in cancer care. They may help the doctor run tests or give you treatment.

Radiology:

- **Interventional Radiologist:** a doctor who specializes in using x-rays to guide the delivery of certain types of treatment. These treatments may be TACE (transarterial chemoembolization) or thermal liver ablation.

Hepatology:

- **Liver Specialist/Hepatologist:** a doctor who specializes in liver-related diseases. For liver cancer patients, the hepatologist is in charge of delivering some types of chemotherapy treatments.

Surgery:

- **Hepatobiliary Surgeons:** a doctor who specializes in surgically removing liver tumors (called resection) or in liver transplants.
- **Liver Transplant Team:** includes surgeons, hepatologists, radiologists, and nurses who care for patients having surgery.

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