



## The Main Clinical Signs, Symptoms, Treatment Methods of Liver Cancer

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### ABSTRACT

This article discusses the main clinical signs, symptoms and treatment of liver cancer. Primary liver cancer is the most dangerous type of cancer affecting the digestive organs. But in recent years, the treatment of this type of cancer has made no small progress.

### Keywords:

Liver Cancer, Symptoms, Healing, Treatment, Death, Oncology.

Liver cancer or hepatocellular carcinoma is a malignant tumor that is localized in the liver. The neoplasm originates from liver cells or is a metastasis of another (primary) tumor. Metastases in the liver develop much more often than primary tumors. This is due to the nature of blood circulation and liver function in the body. Metastasis of a malignant neoplasm is a severe complication that is more dangerous than the primary tumor itself. Metastatic cancer is detected as metastases of a malignant tumor in its primary localization in other organs.

Primary liver cancer has the following types: hepatocellular carcinoma, angioplastic sarcoma (angiosarcoma), hepatoblastoma and hemangiosarcoma, cholangiocarcinoma.

Liver sarcoma is a rare and dangerous disease. The tumor develops very quickly, spreading to neighboring organs. A feature of sarcomas is their occurrence mainly in young people and in children. In particular, angiosarcoma of the liver is a rare form of a malignant tumor. The neoplasm has an

aggressive course, manifests itself as invasive, very rapid growth, metastasizes.

Cholangiocarcinoma, or cancer of the bile duct, can develop both in the liver and outside the organ. The tumor can form in any part of the duct. Depending on the localization of the formation, there are three groups: cancer of the intrahepatic ducts, cancer of the bile duct in the area of the gate of the liver, cancer of the distal bile ducts.

The causes and mechanism of the development of the disease are still not well understood. The influence of geographical location, climate, diet, and certain medications was studied. In patients with alcoholism, primary hepatocellular carcinoma often develops against the background of cirrhosis. Liver cancer can be detected at any age, more often they get sick after 40 years.

**Diagnostics.** LISOD uses modern methods for diagnosing liver cancer that meet international medical standards.

Ultrasound (ultrasound) can detect a tumor and, in some cases, determine its type.

Tumor biopsy is the most reliable method for diagnosing liver cancer. As a rule, a thin long needle is used, which is inserted through the skin into the liver into the tumor area under the control of an ultrasound machine. If during the examination of the tumor site under a microscope, cancer cells are found, the diagnosis of liver cancer is considered confirmed.

Computed tomography (CT) is very effective in diagnosing liver tumors, it can detect even small neoplasms that are invisible on ultrasound. In LISOD, to improve the image, contrast-enhanced CT is performed - a contrast agent is injected intravenously, which allows specialists to study the location of blood vessels in the liver. During computed tomography, the device receives an image of thin sections, which allows specialists to carefully examine the structure of the organ and identify even small tumors.

**Laparoscopy.** The laparoscopic method allows you to make an accurate and correct diagnosis. The method is gentle, fast and painless. Through a small incision, under short-acting anesthesia, the doctor inserts a special device into the abdominal cavity, examines the tumor (on the monitor) and takes a piece of tissue for examination.

**Blood study.** Determining the levels of alpha-fetoprotein (AFP) in the blood is useful both at the stage of diagnosing liver tumors and after treatment to monitor the effectiveness of therapy and possible recurrence of the disease.

**Treatment.** First of all, doctors clarify the diagnosis of the tumor and the degree of its spread. The treatment plan is developed at an interdisciplinary oncology conference.

If the tumor is operable, then preparations for a serious surgical intervention begin. Removal of liver metastases is an effective method of treatment. The liver "knows how" to regenerate, and the removed part is gradually restored. Thus, the leading method remains radical surgery (eg, hemihepatectomy or atypical liver resections) in combination with subsequent chemotherapy.

Radiotherapy is also used in the treatment of liver cancer, the treatment of liver

metastases, as it reduces the rate of tumor growth. Radiotherapy is an effective treatment for liver metastases. Radiotherapy can be used in combination with surgery or chemotherapy. Hepatic artery embolization involves blocking arterial blood that is carried to carcinoid tumors, followed by chemotherapy to shrink the remaining lesions.

Early detection of the disease is the key to successful treatment. Surgery performed in the early stages of liver cancer usually gives good results.

**Symptoms.** Liver cancer usually shows symptoms against the background of chronic diseases (viral hepatitis, cirrhosis, etc.). As a result, new signs of an already existing disease are superimposed.

The appearance of pain in the abdomen or its increase is a symptom of cancer, often indicating a large size of the neoplasm or its spread outside the liver. A feeling of heaviness in the right hypochondrium may be a sign of liver cancer.

Elevated body temperature (above 37.5 degrees Celsius), which lasts a long time and is not explained by other reasons.

The appearance of dropsy (ascites) is an accumulation in the abdominal cavity of fluid that occurs with liver cancer and cirrhosis. Those. the appearance of ascites in a patient with cirrhosis can be both a complication of the underlying disease and a sign of liver cancer.

Jaundice - yellowing of the sclera of the eyes, mucous membranes and skin of the body. It occurs in various conditions, including cirrhosis and liver cancer. Jaundice in a patient can manifest itself as a complication of cirrhosis, but it can also be a sign of liver cancer.

Bloating, weight loss, lack of appetite, severe weakness are symptoms of liver cancer, but can also occur with other diseases.

**Risk factors.** There are known risk factors that may contribute to the development of liver cancer.

Alcohol. Men get sick more often than women. Perhaps this is due to their high consumption of alcohol.

Liver diseases. Chronic infection (hepatitis C or B) is a very significant risk

factor. There are some hereditary diseases that increase the chance of liver cancer.

**Cirrhosis.** A disease that develops as a result of the formation of scar tissue in the liver and often leads to cancer. The most significant causes of cirrhosis are alcohol consumption and hepatitis C and B. Another cause is the accumulation of excess iron in the liver.

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**Tobacco use.** There is a link between smoking and liver cancer. With the concomitant use of alcohol, the risk increases.

**Aflatoxins.** Eating foods that, due to improper storage, are affected by aflatoxin B1 (mitotoxin of the fungus *Aspergillus flavus*), increases the risk of the disease. These products include: wheat, rice, corn, soybeans, peanuts, etc.

Anabolic steroids are male hormones sometimes used by athletes. Their long-term use may slightly increase the risk of developing a malignant liver tumor.

**Arsenic.** There are countries where drinking water is contaminated with arsenic, which increases the risk of liver cancer.

**Prevention.** The main measures to prevent liver cancer are:

- timely vaccination against hepatitis B;
- timely and high-quality treatment of hepatitis B and C;
- treatment of alcoholism and complete rejection of alcohol;
- regular observation by a hepatologist for patients with cirrhosis and chronic viral hepatitis (at least 2-3 times a year).

Of particular importance is the fight against alcoholism, since cirrhosis of the liver (especially large-nodular form) is found in approximately 60-90% of patients with hepatoma.

Primary liver cancer is the most dangerous type of cancer affecting the digestive organs. But in recent years, the treatment of this type of cancer has made no small progress.

The occurrence of liver cancer is most often associated with the transmission of hepatitis B and C infection, excess iron in the body or chronic hepatitis due to overweight. In France, there has been an increase in cases of its occurrence. About 9,000 new cases are registered each year, of which 6,700 are fatal. The death is attributed to the fact that this type of cancer, also called dormant cancer, has no specific symptoms at an early stage.

Thus, its detection occurs too late, and in 75% of cases the malignant tumor is already at a late stage of development. In this case, the patient is provided with palliative care and only 10% of them live more than 5 years.

**People at risk.** In most cases, this type of cancer appears already on the damaged liver (due to cirrhosis or hepatitis B and C). In rare cases, cancer develops in a healthy organ.

The most common form of liver cancer is hepatocellular carcinoma, resulting from malignant transformation of hepatocytes.

About 80% of liver cancer occurs in men and is manifested by emaciation, loss of appetite, nausea, and pain in the upper right abdomen. On palpation, you can also detect a seal.

**Do liver tests, take preventive measures.** The symptoms of liver cancer appear insidiously. Therefore, a series of analyzes and examinations is considered necessary to check the organ.

Sonography every 6 months in people with a hereditary predisposition will detect a malignant tumor of a small size. Unfortunately, this international recommendation is little practiced in real life.

#### **Treatment of liver cancer.**

There are 4 methods of treating liver cancer: partial removal, liver transplantation, percutaneous destruction of tumor foci and chemotherapy.

If the functional work of the liver is not impaired, its partial removal is possible. If the liver ceases to function normally, an organ transplant is necessary.

Depending on the size and location of the malignant tumor in the liver, percutaneous destruction of tumor foci using radiofrequency is an alternative solution to surgery.

This modern method of treatment consists in spreading hot air using an electrode implanted to contact the tumor.

Chemotherapy will slow down the development of cancer if it cannot be removed. There are 2 different forms: chemoembolization or targeted therapy.

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