

Liver Cancer

Signs, symptoms
and testing



Key signs and symptoms

01

**Pain in your tummy,
right shoulder or
back**

02

**A swollen tummy or a
lump in your tummy**

03

**Yellow skin and
whites of eyes
(jaundice)**

04

**Losing weight without
trying**

These symptoms can be caused by conditions other than cancer, but it's important to get them checked by a GP.

Liver cancer basics and next steps

Who is at higher risk for liver cancer?

Liver cancer is most common in people over 85, although those over 60 might be more likely to get it than younger people. You also have a higher risk if you have certain medical conditions, such as hepatitis, liver cirrhosis, gallstones, diabetes, a parasite in the liver (liver flukes) or HIV. A family history also increases risk.

How is liver cancer diagnosed?

If you have signs or symptoms that may indicate potential liver cancer, your GP will probably carry out a physical examination and may order blood tests.

What if someone has a family history of liver cancer?

People with a family history of liver cancer, as well as risk factors such as liver cirrhosis or hepatitis B, should speak to their GP. They may be referred to a genetic counsellor who can assess their risk and talk through next steps.

Are there any other symptoms?

- Feeling or being sick
- Loss of appetite or feeling full after eating small amounts
Itching
- Feeling weak or tired (fatigue)
- High temperature (fever)
- These symptoms can be caused by conditions other than liver cancer. However, if they're new for you or won't go away, you should contact your GP.

When should you contact a GP?

- ✓ If you notice any of the symptoms on page 1.
- ✓ If symptoms persist or feel unusual for you.
- ✓ If you are at a higher risk for liver cancer.
- ✓ If you feel worried, it's always better to check.

40%

Of men and women aged 55+ worry about getting cancer

49%

Of liver cancer cases in the UK are preventable

15%

Of people will survive liver cancer for 5 years or more after diagnosis

Common myths about liver cancer

Myth "Only older men get liver cancer"

Fact While being older and male can increase risk, liver cancer can affect people of any age. Around two-thirds of UK cases occur in men, but women are also at risk.

Myth "A diagnosis means nothing can be done"

Fact Half of people diagnosed with stage 1 liver cancer will survive for four or more years.

Myth "Family history means I'll definitely get it"

Fact Having a close family member with liver cancer can increase your risk.

Myth "Liver cancer is only caused by alcohol"

Fact Heavy alcohol use does damage the liver, however, only around 7% of liver cancer cases are linked to alcohol.

Myth "Liver cancer is rare"

Fact Whilst liver cancer is the 17th most common cancer in the UK, it is the 8th most common cause of cancer-related death.

Myth "It always causes early symptoms"

Fact Primary liver cancer doesn't usually cause symptoms in the early stages, so it's important to know your risk factors.