

NCCN QUICK GUIDE™

# Liver Cancer

## Hepatobiliary Cancers



This NCCN QUICK GUIDE™ sheet summarizes key points from the complete [NCCN Guidelines for Patients®: Liver Cancer](#). These guidelines explain which tests and treatments are recommended by experts in cancer. To view and download the guidelines, visit [NCCN.org/patientguidelines](http://NCCN.org/patientguidelines) or, to order printed copies, visit [Amazon.com](http://Amazon.com).

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### What is the liver?



The liver is the largest organ in the body. It is located on the right side of the body under your rib cage. The liver filters blood, helps with blood clotting, makes bile, breaks down fats, and helps process sugar for energy. The liver also produces lymph.	<a href="#">7</a>
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### What is liver cancer?

Cancer that starts in the liver is called primary liver cancer. The most common type is hepatocellular carcinoma (HCC).	<a href="#">12</a>
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### What are the treatment groups?

<b>Resectable</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A tumor that can be removed with surgery is called resectable. This is different from a liver transplant, which removes all of the liver and replaces it with a donor liver. Both are options.</li> </ul>	<a href="#">38</a>
<b>Unresectable</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A tumor that cannot be removed with surgery is called unresectable. Treatment might be a liver transplant or another treatment.</li> </ul>	<a href="#">41</a>
<b>Inoperable</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>In inoperable liver cancer, resection and a liver transplant are not options. There are other treatment options.</li> </ul>	<a href="#">46</a>
<b>Metastatic</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Stage 4B liver cancer is metastatic liver cancer. This is cancer that has spread to distant sites in the body. Treatment options include a clinical trial, best supportive care, or systemic therapy.</li> </ul>	<a href="#">50</a>



## What are my treatment options?

<b>Surgery</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Surgery to remove the tumor is called resection. Surgery that removes the tumor with part of the liver is a partial hepatectomy.</li> </ul>	<b><u>27</u></b>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ In a liver transplant, all of your diseased liver is removed and replaced with a healthy, donor liver.</li> </ul>	
<b>Ablation</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Ablation is a type of local treatment that uses extreme cold or heat, radio waves, microwaves, or chemicals such ethanol (a type of alcohol) or acetic acid to destroy cancer cells.</li> </ul>	<b><u>30</u></b>
<b>Arterially directed therapy</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Arterially directed therapy treats tumors by injecting particles, chemotherapy, or radioactive beads directly into the blood vessels that supply the tumor(s).</li> </ul>	<b><u>31</u></b>
<b>Radiation therapy</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Radiation therapy uses high-energy radiation from x-rays, gamma rays, protons, and other sources to kill cancer cells and shrink tumors.</li> </ul>	<b><u>32</u></b>
<b>Systemic therapy</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ A cancer treatment that affects the whole body is called systemic therapy.</li> </ul>	<b><u>33</u></b>
<b>Clinical trials</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Clinical trials study how safe and helpful tests and treatments are for people.</li> </ul>	<b><u>34</u></b>
<b>Supportive care</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Supportive care is health care that relieves symptoms caused by cancer or its treatment and improves quality of life.</li> </ul>	<b><u>35</u></b>

## How can you decide between options?

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Don't be shy and ask your doctors questions. They are there to help.</li> <li>■ Get a second opinion. Even doctors get second opinions!</li> <li>■ Support groups can be helpful. You can learn a lot from others.</li> <li>■ Compare the pros and cons of each option.</li> </ul>	<b><u>55</u></b>
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