

Liver Cancer

The liver is a vital organ that filters toxins from the blood, helps regulate blood sugar, and manufactures proteins to do work in the body. Liver cancer occurs when liver cells grow uncontrollably and form tumors that impair liver function. Many forms of liver cancer are highly preventable. Because liver cancer often does not cause symptoms until advanced stages, regular surveillance every six months is recommended for certain high-risk individuals.

Statistics

- In 2026, an estimated 42,340 new cases of liver cancer will be diagnosed in the United States.
- An estimated 30,980 people will die from liver cancer in 2026.
- The five-year survival rate for liver cancer is 22%, but it improves to 38% for people diagnosed with early-stage disease.
- In Texas, approximately 3,170 deaths due to liver cancer are expected in 2026.

Risk Factors

Many liver cancers can be prevented by reducing exposure to risk factors, such as:

- **Tobacco and Heavy Alcohol Use:** Drinking alcohol can increase the risk of cirrhosis, which can lead to liver cancer. Smoking can also increase liver cancer risk by introducing toxins to the body that cause damage to liver cells, DNA mutations, and inflammation.
- **Excess Body Weight:** People with excess weight are more likely to develop diabetes and fatty liver disease, both of which are associated with an increased risk of liver cancer.
- **Chronic Infection with Hepatitis C (HCV) and or Hepatitis B (HBV):** Long-term infection with HCV or HBV can cause persistent liver inflammation, leading to repeated cycles of liver cell damage and regeneration. Over time, this chronic stress can result in DNA damage, increasing the risk of liver cancer.
- **Food Contaminated with Aflatoxin:** Aflatoxins are highly toxic substances produced by certain fungi that can grow on improperly stored grains, such as corn, wheat, peanuts, and rice. In the United States, FDA surveillance prevents aflatoxin contamination of the food supply, but this has been a risk factor seen worldwide.

Symptoms

Liver cancer symptoms do not usually appear until the disease has advanced. Symptoms can include:

- Abdominal pain and/or swelling
- Weight loss
- Nausea
- Loss of appetite
- Jaundice (yellow discoloration of the skin and white areas of the eyes)
- Fever
- Enlargement of the liver

Prevention

Most liver cancers are preventable. You can take steps to lower your risk, such as:

- Getting vaccinated against Hepatitis B
- Maintaining a healthy weight through a nutritious diet and regular physical activity
- Limiting or avoiding alcohol
- Avoiding or quitting smoking

Treatment Options

Depending on the stage of disease and the tumor's size and location, liver cancer may be treated with one or a combination of the following:

- Surgery
- Tumor ablation (destruction)
- Embolization (blocking blood flow to the tumor)
- Radiation therapy
- Targeted therapy
- Immunotherapy

About Texas Oncology

Founded in 1986, Texas Oncology is an independent, physician-led practice and a member of the US Oncology Network. With more than 550 physicians and 300 locations across Texas, Texas Oncology serves over 250,000 cancer patients each year.

Texas Oncology provides advanced care across 19 specialties and offers a comprehensive clinical trials and research program that has contributed to the development of more than 100 FDA-approved cancer therapies. Learn more at [TexasOncology.com](https://www.texasoncology.com).