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PDF generated on June 24, 2016 from http://www.cancer.net/es/node/19138

Liver Cancer - Symptoms and Signs [1]

This section has been reviewed and approved by the Cancer.Net Editorial Board [2], 05/2016

ON THIS PAGE: You will find out more about body changes and other things that can signal a problem that may need medical care. To see other pages in this guide, use the menu.

People with HCC may experience no symptoms, particularly when the tumor is detected early as part of a screening program. When symptoms or signs do occur, they include:

- Pain, especially at the top right of the abdominal area, near the right shoulder blade, or in the back
- Unexplained weight loss
- A hard lump under the ribs on the right side of the body, which could be the tumor or a sign that the liver has gotten bigger
- Weakness or fatigue

When HCC is diagnosed, some people will already know that they have cirrhosis and will be receiving care from a doctor. Some symptoms experienced by patients with HCC may be caused by cirrhosis rather than the tumor. These symptoms include abdominal swelling from ascites (fluid accumulation) and needing more diuretics (water tablets) to control the fluid accumulation. Hepatic encephalopathy (mental confusion) and bleeding from the esophagus or stomach, or any worsening of the condition, may also indicate cancer.

If you are concerned about any changes you experience, please talk with your doctor. Your doctor will ask how long and how often you've been experiencing the symptom(s), in addition to other questions. This is to help find out the cause of the problem, called a diagnosis [3].

If cancer is diagnosed, relieving symptoms remains an important part of cancer care and treatment. This may also be called symptom management, palliative care, or supportive care. Be sure to talk with your health care team about symptoms you experience, including any new symptoms or a change in symptoms.

The next section in this guide is Diagnosis [3]*. It explains what tests may be needed to learn more about the cause of the symptoms. Or, use the menu to choose another section to continue reading this guide.*

Links
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