

Liver Cancer - Latest Research [1]

This section has been reviewed and approved by the [Cancer.Net Editorial Board](#) [2], 03/2014

ON THIS PAGE: You will read about the scientific research being done now to learn more about this type of cancer and how to treat it. To see other pages, use the menu on the side of your screen.

Doctors are working to learn more about HCC, ways to prevent it, how to best treat it, and how to provide the best care to people diagnosed with this disease. The following areas of research may include new options for patients through [clinical trials](#) [3]. Always talk with your doctor about the diagnostic and treatment options best for you.

Cancer vaccines [4]. These are treatments that may help the patient's immune system recognize and attack HCC cells. Sometimes the vaccine is given with an immune system stimulant, such as sargramostim (Leukine, Prokine).

Combination chemotherapy. Different drugs destroy cancer cells in different ways. Using a combination of drugs can increase the chance more cancer cells will be killed; many times one drug will help the other drug work better.

Combining therapies. Researchers are looking into whether combining treatments, such as RFA and chemoembolization, is more effective than using these treatments separately.

Anti-angiogenesis drugs [5]. In addition to sorafenib (see the [Treatment Options](#) [6] section), several other anti-angiogenic agents are being tested in clinical trials.

Greater use of liver transplantation. The possibility of expanding the criteria for liver transplantation is being studied for HCC, which would make more patients eligible for the procedure.

Gene therapy. This new treatment changes a gene to fight cancer. Although gene therapy is in the very early stages of development, some clinical trials are already underway. In one example, the new gene makes chemotherapy work better. In this type of treatment, a gene can be directly injected into the tumor. The doctor then gives the patient the inactive drug and this new gene helps activate the drug in the tumor. These and the targeted therapy sorafenib (see the [Treatment Options](#) [6] section) are being tested in combination with other treatments as listed above.

Supportive care. Clinical trials are underway to find better ways of reducing symptoms and side effects of current HCC treatments in order to improve patients' comfort and quality of life.

Looking for More About the Latest Research?

If you would like additional information about the latest areas of research regarding liver cancer, explore these related items that take you outside of this guide:

- To find clinical trials specific to your diagnosis, talk with your doctor or [search online clinical trial databases now](#) [7].
- Review research announced at the [2011 ASCO Annual Meeting](#) [8] about using a targeted therapy to treat advanced liver cancer.
- Listen to a [podcast with Richard Goldberg, MD](#) [9] that highlights research on colorectal cancer, liver cancer, and cancers of the upper portion of the gastrointestinal tract presented at the 2012 ASCO Annual Meeting.
- Visit ASCO's [CancerProgress.Net](#) [10] website to learn more about the historical pace of research for liver cancer. Please note this link takes you to a separate ASCO website.

The next section addresses how to cope with the symptoms of the disease or the side effects of its treatment. Use the menu on the side of your screen to select [Coping with Side Effects](#), or you can select another section, to continue reading this guide.

Links:

[1] <http://www.cancer.net/cancer-types/liver-cancer/latest-research>

[2] <http://www.cancer.net/about-us>

[3] <http://www.cancer.net/node/24863>

[4] <http://www.cancer.net/node/24721>

[5] <http://www.cancer.net/node/24376>

[6] <http://www.cancer.net/node/19141>

[7] <http://www.cancer.net/node/24878>

[8] <http://www.cancer.net/node/24417>

[9] <http://www.cancer.net/2012-asco-annual-meeting-research-round-gastrointestinal-cancers-richard-goldberg-md>

[10] <http://www.cancerprogress.net/timeline/liver-cancer>