

LIVER CANCER

Liver cancer begins in the cells of the liver. The incidence in males is practically 2 ½ times more than in females. Incidence increases at age 40. Hepatitis B virus (HBV) is associated with liver cancer. Primary liver cancer is much more common in countries where HBV is prevalent, such as the Philippines and other Southeast Asian countries.

Causes

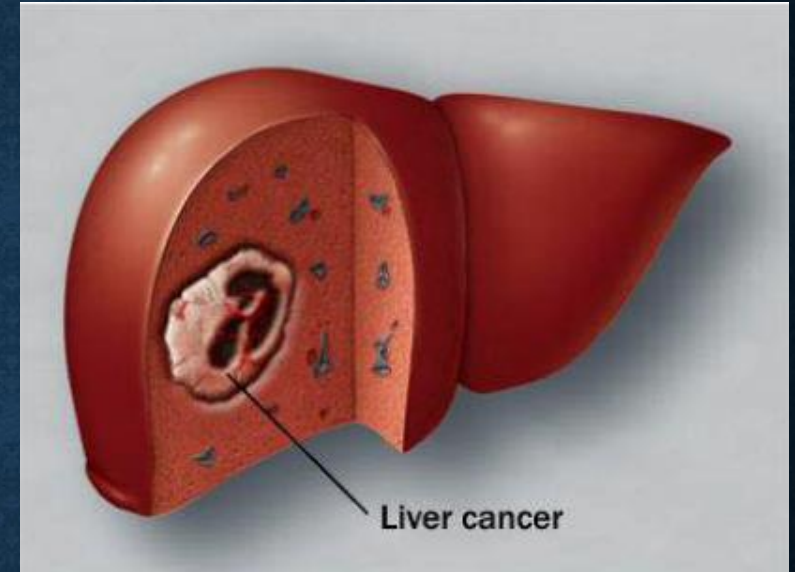
- (Complication of) Hepatitis B and Hepatitis C
- Heavy alcohol consumption
- Prolonged heavy intake of aflatoxin and other chemical carcinogens

Signs and Symptoms

- Abdominal pain
- Weight loss
- Weakness
- Loss of appetite
- Abdominal mass or an enlarged liver

Treatment

For the occasional patient seen in an early stage, surgery can be curative. For the majority of cases, who are usually seen in an incurable stage, judicious and cost-effective palliative care can provide an acceptable quality of life.



Prevention

Lowering the prevalence of Hepatitis B through infant vaccination and improving sanitation nationwide is a positive step.

Unfortunately, there is no efficient early detection method yet for liver cancer.