

Cirrhosis of the Liver: Screening for cancer

Why do I need screening for liver cancer?

People who have cirrhosis of the liver have a higher risk of liver cancer because of the scarring on the liver. Liver cancer starts when cells change and begin to grow out of control, forming a mass called a tumor.

Symptoms of liver cancer are rarely noticed in the early stages. But, if found early, more treatment options are available, which improves your chances of survival.

How is liver cancer diagnosed?

Your doctor will order blood tests called **tumor markers** every 6 months. They help your doctor know if your risk of liver cancer has increased.

Another way to find out is with **radiographic** [ray-dee-oh-GRAF-ik] **images**, such as an **ultrasound** or **CT** (computed tomography) scan. These imaging tests are also done every 6 months. Regular imaging is the best way to spot any changes in your liver.

Ultrasound does not use radiation like CT. However, CT scans are more accurate. Your doctor may alternate these tests to reduce your exposure to radiation.

For more information, call our clinic at 801-507-3380.

When should I call my doctor?

Call the office if you develop new or worsening symptoms such as:

- Sudden, unexplained weight loss
- Loss of appetite
- Extreme tiredness (fatigue)
- Sudden jaundice [JAWN-diss] (yellowing of the skin)



What can I do?

To keep your liver disease from getting worse, follow all of your doctor's orders including:

- 1 Getting your blood tests done on time
- 2 Having regular imaging tests
- 3 Following a Mediterranean-style diet that is low in salt
- 4 Drinking coffee as recommended
- 5 Taking your medications exactly as prescribed
- 6 Avoiding alcohol or any other harmful substances that may have contributed to your disease

