

AWARENESS OF COMMON CANCERS IN LIVER

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Summary

Cancer is a disease in which cells in the body grow out of control. When cancer starts in the liver, it is called *liver cancer*.

Cancer liver occurs in obese persons, alcoholics, smokers and in hepatitis B&C patients.

Risk factors include smoking, excess drinking alcohol, patients with liver cirrhosis, Non Alcoholic liver diseased persons and primary sclerosing cholangitis.

There are many ways that people can advocate for awareness. One of the most effective ways is through education and spreading information about cancer prevention, screening, and treatment. This can be done through social media, public speaking engagements, or hosting informational events.

Cancer awareness is when people understand what cancer is, the causes of cancer, knowing the national cancer screening programs available and what to do.

Liver cancer is treatable and sometimes even curable when it's caught early. That's why it's important to be aware of the risk and recognize any symptoms that could be associated with the disease.

Cancer is a disease in which cells in the body grow out of control. When cancer starts in the liver, it is called *liver cancer*. Each year in the United States, about 25,000 men and 11,000 women get liver cancer, and about 19,000 men and 9,000 women die from the disease. The percentage of Americans who get liver cancer rose for several decades, but is now declining. Liver cancer is more common in other parts of the world than in the United States

Almost 300 million people worldwide are living with hepatitis B, and that puts them at higher risk for developing liver cancer. Many other causes play a role in developing cancer.

What Causes Liver Cancer?

- Being overweight or having obesity.
- Having a long-term hepatitis B virus or hepatitis C virus infection.
- Smoking cigarettes.
- Drinking alcohol.
- Having cirrhosis (scarring of the liver, which can also be caused by hepatitis and alcohol use (1)).

Risk Factors for Most Common Forms of Liver Cancer

Several factors raise a person's risk for liver cancer:

- **Cirrhosis:** This condition causes scar tissue to form in the liver, which significantly increases the chances of developing liver cancer, including hepatocellular carcinoma (HCC) and

cholangiocarcinoma. More than 80 percent of patients with hepatocellular carcinoma (HCC) in the United States have cirrhosis, and HCC is a leading cause of death in patients with cirrhosis.

- **Chronic hepatitis B and hepatitis C infections:** These infections increase the risk of liver cancer (hepatocellular carcinoma and cholangiocarcinoma) because they often lead to cirrhosis of the liver, although hepatitis B can lead to liver cancer without cirrhosis. They are the most common causes of hepatocellular carcinoma. Hepatitis B or C are both treatable conditions and treatment of these conditions significantly reduces the risk of developing HCC.
- **Excessive alcohol use:** Consuming more than a moderate amount of alcohol daily over many years can lead to irreversible liver damage and increase the risk of liver cancer.
- **Nonalcoholic fatty liver disease (NAFLD), obesity, and diabetes:** These conditions are all related to fat accumulating in the liver, increasing the risk of liver cancer. NAFLD is now the most common liver disease in the United States, with nearly one-third of Americans having a component of NAFLD.
- **Certain inherited liver diseases:** Genetic hemochromatosis, tyrosinemia, alpha-1 antitrypsin deficiency, porphyria cutanea tarda, glycogen storage disease, and Wilson's disease are rare diseases that can damage the liver and increase a person's liver cancer risk.
- **Primary sclerosing cholangitis (PSC):** PSC, a chronic disease causing narrowing of the bile ducts, is one of the major causes of cholangiocarcinoma and gallbladder cancer in the United States. Because liver cancer is a major cause of death in patients with PSC, screening for cholangiocarcinoma using MRI and blood tests is encouraged by some experts.
- **Choledochal cyst:** A congenital abnormality of the bile duct that is often asymptomatic, a choledochal cyst increases the risk of cholangiocarcinoma (2) .

Liver Cancer Symptoms

Like many cancers, primary liver cancer seldom produces symptoms in its early stages. That's why it's often diagnosed once it has already advanced. If symptoms do occur, they might include:

- Fatigue
- Bloating
- Pain on the right side in the upper abdomen
- Nausea
- Loss of appetite
- Feeling full
- Unexplained weight loss
- Weakness
- Fever
- Jaundice
- White, chalky stool (3).

How to deal with people with cancer?

Try to remember that the most important thing is not what you say – it's that you're there and willing to listen. Try to hear and understand how your friend feels. Let them know that you're open to talking whenever they feel like it. Or, if the person doesn't feel like talking, let them know that's OK, too (4)

Why is cancer awareness important?

Help people recognize the early signs and symptoms of cancer, thus enabling them to seek treatment at an early stage. Educate people about the key risk factors, since more than 30% of cancer cases could be prevented by modifying lifestyle or avoiding the risk factors (5)..

How can we promote awareness about cancer?

There are many ways that people can advocate for awareness. One of the most effective ways is through education and spreading information about cancer prevention, screening, and treatment. This can be done through social media, public speaking engagements, or hosting informational events (6).

What is the best thing to say to someone who has cancer?

"I'm not sure what to say, but I want you to know I care". "I'm sorry to hear that you are going through this". "How are you doing?" "If you would like to talk about it, I'm here" (7)

Cancer awareness is when **people understand what cancer is**, the causes of cancer, knowing the national cancer screening programmes available and what to do. How we are supporting to raise **awareness of cancer** within our community through our **awareness** and prevention tools and resources. There are many ways that people can advocate for awareness. One of the most effective ways is through education and spreading information about cancer prevention, screening, and treatment. This can be done through social media, public speaking engagements, or hosting informational events.(8).

- **Early detection:** Knowing the signs and symptoms can help with early detection. The earlier its is detected, the better the chances of successful treatment and outcomes.
- **Treatment options:** With better knowledge about the disease, people can understand the available treatment options and make informed decisions about their healthcare. This can also help to manage expectations about potential side effects and recovery times.
- **Prevention:** Understanding the risk factors and lifestyle choices that may increase the risk of developing the disease can help people make proactive choices to reduce their risk.
- **Support:** Knowing more about cancer can also help individuals and their loved ones better understand the physical, emotional, and psychological impacts of a diagnosis. This can help people better prepare for what lies ahead and seek out the necessary support from family, friends, and healthcare professionals.
- **Advocacy:** Being well-informed can also help individuals become advocates for themselves and others. They can raise awareness about the disease, advocate for increased funding for research, and promote policies and initiatives that support cancer patients and their families (9).

Liver cancer is treatable and sometimes even curable when it's caught early. That's why it's important to be aware of the risk and recognize any symptoms that could be associated with the disease (10) .

The responses regarding perception about causes of **liver cancer** and cirrhosis revealed that most of the Brazilian population attributed **liver Cancer to viral infections**. Inadequate knowledge about cirrhosis and HCC is considered a critical factor in population's commitment toward HBV vaccination and testing, HCV screening and VH treatment which may impact the Brazilian viral hepatitis elimination plan in the near future (11).

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