

A Guide to Understanding Hepatocellular Carcinoma (HCC)



Liver Foundation acknowledges the
Traditional Custodians of this land.

We pay our respects to Elders past,
present and emerging.

What is in this booklet?

How to use this booklet	2
What is Hepatocellular Carcinoma (HCC)?	4
Why does Hepatocellular Carcinoma happen?	5
How do I know I have Hepatocellular Carcinoma?	6
Hepatitis B and HCC	6
What to do next	8
Healthy living for my liver	9
How do I take care of my liver?	9
Eating	10
Staying active	11
Stop drinking alcohol	12
Medications	12
My notes	13
Contact us	16



How to use this booklet

Learning about liver cancer can feel scary.

Many people feel this way.

You are not alone. We are here to help.

You can talk to:

- Your GP
- Your specialist
- A nurse from the Liver Foundation Support Line.

It is free and private.

You can:

- Ask questions
- Ask a friend or family member to come with you
- Ask for an interpreter

These are your rights

IMPORTANT WORDS TO KNOW

They will help you read this booklet.

Hepatocellular carcinoma	The most common liver cancer. It starts in the liver.
Cirrhosis	This means your liver has become hard and lumpy from scarring. The scarring stops your liver from working well.
Tumour	A lump of bad cells in the body
Ultrasound	This is a scan that uses sound waves to take pictures of the inside of your body.
Regular checks	Checks to find cancer early.
Hepatitis B & C	Virus infections that can make the liver very sick over time.

What is Hepatocellular Carcinoma (HCC)?

Hepatocellular carcinoma (HCC) is cancer that starts in the liver. Sometimes it can spread to other parts of the body.

You may not feel sick at first.

Some people only find out they have HCC after it has been growing for a long time.

If you have cirrhosis, you have more of a chance of getting HCC than someone without cirrhosis.

The sooner you find HCC, the better the chance it can be cured.

**You are not alone.
We are here to help.**



Why does Hepatocellular Carcinoma happen?

Sometimes people get HCC even if they do not have cirrhosis.

This does not happen often.

If you have cirrhosis, you can get HCC, even if you feel well.

You may get cirrhosis and HCC if you have:

- Hepatitis B or hepatitis C
- Have metabolic risk factors such as type 2 diabetes, high cholesterol, high blood pressure or are overweight or obese.
- Fatty liver disease
- A liver problem that runs in families

You may get cirrhosis and HCC if you have:

- Drink too much alcohol
- Your body's immune system attacks your liver

How do I know I have Hepatocellular Carcinoma?

HCC may not have any signs at the start.

This test is for people at higher risk.

Have an ultrasound every 6 months to check for early HCC.

People who have cirrhosis and some people with hepatitis B need this check.

When doctors find HCC early, treatment can work better.

Hepatitis B and HCC

If you have hepatitis B, you may be more likely to get HCC.

This can happen if you do not have cirrhosis but you belong to one of these groups:

- Asian men older than 40
- Asian women older than 50
- People of African heritage older than 20
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people older than 50

SIGNS OF HCC:



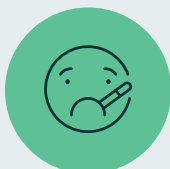
Losing weight
quickly without
trying



Not feeling
hungry



Pain in the upper
right belly



Feeling sick



Fatigue
very tired



Yellow eyes or
yellow skin

What to do next

If you think you might have liver problems, see your doctor. Your doctor can organise blood tests and scans.

If you have HCC, there are different treatments.

Your doctors will talk to you about what is best for you.

Things that can help your liver and your care:

- 1 Do not drink alcohol.
- 2 Do not take things that can make your liver more sick, like liver tonics.
Check with your doctor first.
- 3 Check with your doctor before you take any medications or things you buy over the counter.
- 4 Talk to your doctor if you are worried.

Ask for help if you feel sad, worried or unwell.

Healthy living for my liver

New health information can feel scary.

It can be hard to understand.

It is okay to go slowly.

You do not need to do everything at once.

Start with one small step.

How do I take care of my liver?

Easy steps:

- Drink water during the day
- Eat more vegetables and fruit
- Go for a short walk
- Move your body for a few minutes
- Go to your appointments
- Call the Support Line and ask one question





Eating

Pick foods that you like and are low cost.

- Try not to skip any meals
- Eat protein at every meal
- Eat less takeaways, chips and cakes
- Drink less juice and soft drink

If you feel sick, not hungry or stressed:

- Eat small snacks every 2 to 3 hours
- Choose soft foods, like soup, yoghurt or smoothies
- Ask your doctor or dietitian for help



Staying active

Staying active is good for your whole body.

It is also good for your liver.

- Being active can help you:
- Stay healthy
- Reduce the chance of diabetes and heart problems
- Improve your mental health
- Keep you strong

Being active is good for you.

Start slowly, but be active every day.

Staying active means things that:

- Make you a little short of breath
- Help keep your muscles strong, like squats

See your doctor before you start new exercise



Stop drinking alcohol

If you have cirrhosis or advanced liver disease, do not drink alcohol.

If stopping alcohol feels hard, you are not alone.

Talk to your doctor.

You can also call the Support Line for help.



Medications

It is important to take the medications your doctor gives you.

Talk to your doctor if you are worried.

Always check with your doctor before taking:

- Supplements
- Herbal medicine
- Over the counter medications

This is important because some things can make liver problems worse.

MORE INFORMATION



Scan the QR code to learn more about
Hepatocellular Carcinoma (HCC)



My notes

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....



My notes

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

Contact us

If you have questions about liver cancer or liver problems, you can call our Support Line.

You will speak to a liver nurse.

The nurse is caring and knows a lot about the liver.

The Support Line is:

- **Free and private.**

You do not have to give your name.

It's for people in Australia:

- Patients
 - Families
 - Carers
 - Health workers
-
- Open on weekdays 8am to 6pm
 - Closed on weekends and public holidays



Contact us

- You can talk to a nurse who knows a lot about liver problems

- Phone: 1800 841 118



- Email support@liver.org.au

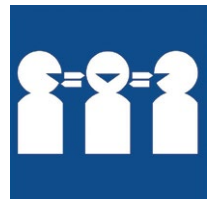


- You can ask for an Interpreter or Auslan.

- Call TIS National 131 450.

Tell them you want to speak to the

Liver Foundation Support Line at 1800 841 118.



MORE INFORMATION



Scan the QR code to learn more about Nurse-Led Support.

What is Liver Foundation?

Liver Foundation is an Australian organisation and we:

- Teach people about liver health
- Promote early testing and awareness of risk factors
- Support research
- Help people get care

The Liver Cancer Nurse Led Support Line:

- Is run by liver nurses
- Is funded by the Australian Government

The Support Line helps people with cancer and Hepatocellular carcinoma.

It helps people understand the health system.



[liver.org.au/languages/
easy-english](https://liver.org.au/languages/easy-english)