



## DOCTOR DISCUSSION GUIDE

# Managing Liver Cancer

If you've been diagnosed with liver cancer, you and your doctor will work closely together to optimize your treatment and help you take control of your symptoms. Asking the right questions during your conversation will help you know what to expect and how to better navigate your condition. Familiarize yourself with these common terms before your appointment to help facilitate your discussion.

## Vocabulary to Know

Your doctor might mention these common terms. Here's what they mean.

<b>Imaging Tests</b>	If your doctor suspects you have liver cancer, they will likely recommend imaging tests to get a better idea of what's happening with your liver. Tests might include an ultrasound, CT scan, MRI scan, angiography, or bone scan.
<b>Alpha-Fetoprotein Blood Test (AFP)</b>	This screening test (also called the AFP tumor marker test) measures the amount of AFP in the blood. AFP is a protein typically made by the liver in utero, and levels are normally low in adults. Higher levels of AFP are a warning sign for many liver-related health issues, including liver cancer.
<b>Liver Function Tests (LFTs)</b>	These tests check to see how healthy the liver is by measuring specific protein levels, bilirubin, or liver enzymes. This information is often used by doctors when determining a treatment plan, as some treatment options aren't recommended for those whose livers have already been damaged by other medical conditions.
<b>Hepatocellular Carcinoma</b>	The most common type of liver cancer in the United States, hepatocellular carcinoma can start as small nodules throughout the liver or a single tumor.
<b>TNM Staging</b>	While there are several methods doctors use to determine what stage of liver cancer you're in, the American Joint Committee on Cancer TNM system is the most common in the United States. Numbers are assigned to each letter. The lower the number, the less advanced the liver cancer.
<b>Potentially Resectable</b>	For early-stage liver cancer when the rest of the liver is otherwise healthy, doctors might determine the cancer to be potentially resectable, meaning surgery alone might be enough to treat the cancer.
<b>Potentially Transplantable</b>	For early-stage liver cancer when the rest of the liver is not otherwise healthy, doctors might recommend a liver transplant. In these cases, individuals with liver cancer might undergo different treatment options while waiting for a transplant.
<b>Tumor Ablation</b>	Ablation is a type of treatment that destroys small liver tumors when they can't be removed effectively. This is done using a variety of methods, including high-energy radio waves, ethanol, or cryotherapy (where the tumor is frozen).
<b>Embolization</b>	Embolization is a treatment method that kills liver cancer cells by cutting off or reducing their blood flow. This is sometimes recommended for those with large liver tumors or those whose tumors can't be removed using surgery.

