



APTA OncologySM

An Academy of the American
Physical Therapy Association

Student and New
Professional Subcommittee



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Downloads:

Liver Cancer



Liver Cancer



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What is Liver Cancer?

- Cancer that starts in the cells of the liver and adjoining tissues
 - **Hepatocytes** are the primary cell type
- Disrupts function of the liver, including:
 - Make **clotting factors** to prevent excessive bleeding
 - Help break down, absorb, and store **nutrients**
 - Break down **alcohol, drugs, and toxins** in the blood in order to be excreted from the body

Major Types

- **Hepatocellular Carcinoma**
 - Most common
- **Cholangiocarcinoma**
 - Bile duct cancer
- **Metastatic Liver Cancer**
 - Cancer cells from a different part of the body that spread to the liver

Common Signs and Symptoms

- Weight loss
- Loss of appetite
- Nausea or vomiting
- Pain in the abdomen or right shoulder
- Enlarged liver or spleen
- Swelling in the abdomen
- Jaundice of the skin or eyes

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Treatments

- **Chemotherapy**
- **Radiation therapy**
- **Surgical resection, ablation, or transplant**
- **Targeted drug therapy**
- **Immunotherapy**

- Chronic hepatitis B and C infection, cirrhosis, obesity, and type 2 diabetes mellitus are risk factors for liver cancer
- Frailty, sarcopenia, obesity, and anaerobic threshold can be prognostic factors
- Prehabilitation may shorten postoperative hospital stay and improve outcomes
- Studies have demonstrated higher survival rate in those receiving cancer rehabilitation

Clinical Implications

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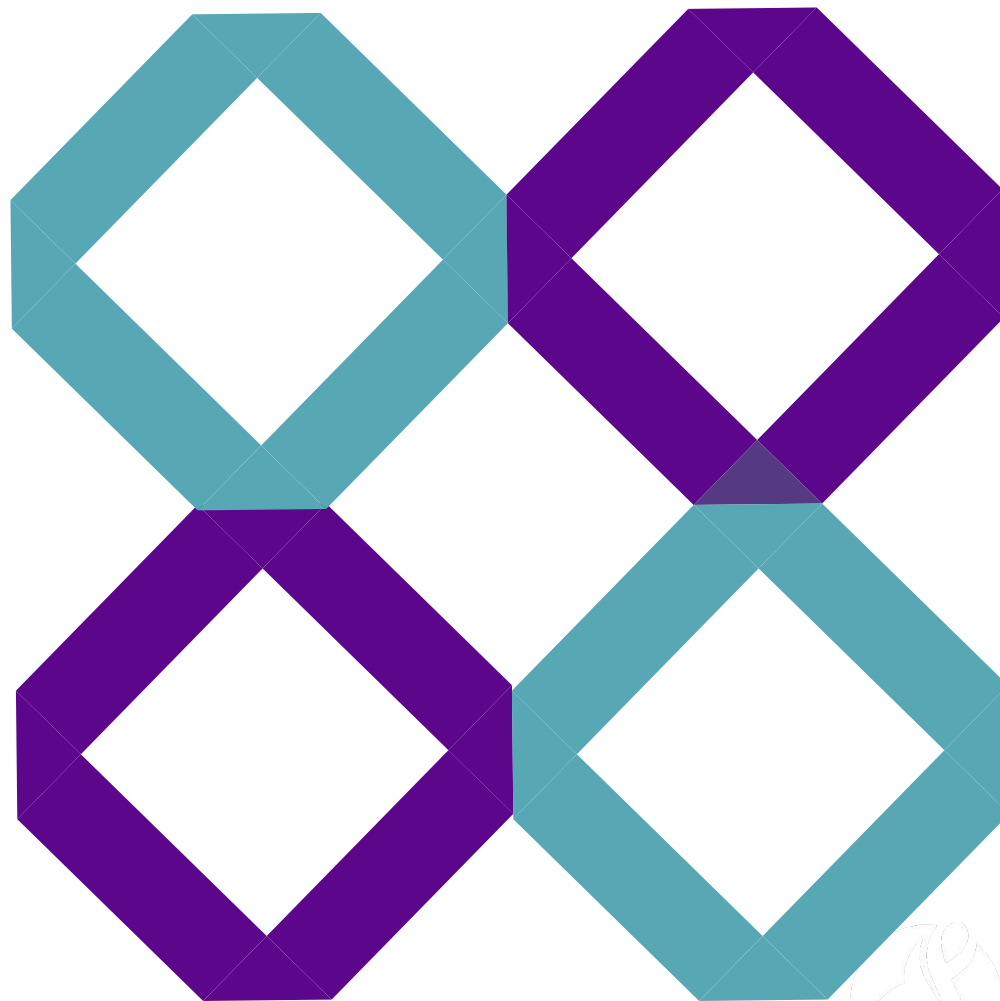
Physical Therapist's Role

Screen

Screen gastrointestinal system, identify red flags and utilize differential diagnosis

Intervene

Identify and treat impairments from liver cancer and different treatment options



Prehab

Physical therapy 'prehab' before surgical treatment may lead to better outcomes

Educate

Promote physical therapy from diagnosis through survivorship to improve quality of life and outcomes



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Takeaways

1

There are modifiable risk factors related to the development of liver cancer

2

Physical Therapists can aid in addressing impairments along treatment spectrum

3

Cancer rehabilitation and prehabilitation may contribute to better outcomes and increased survival rates

4

Advocate for lifelong physical activity to decrease risk factors and poor prognostic indicators of liver cancer

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Resources

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