



**APTA Oncology**<sup>SM</sup>

An Academy of the American  
Physical Therapy Association

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Student and New  
Professional Subcommittee

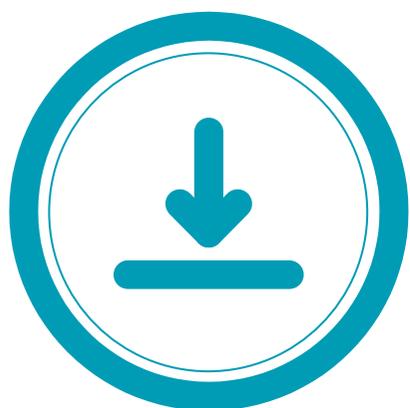
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**Liver Cancer**



# 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

# Liver Cancer



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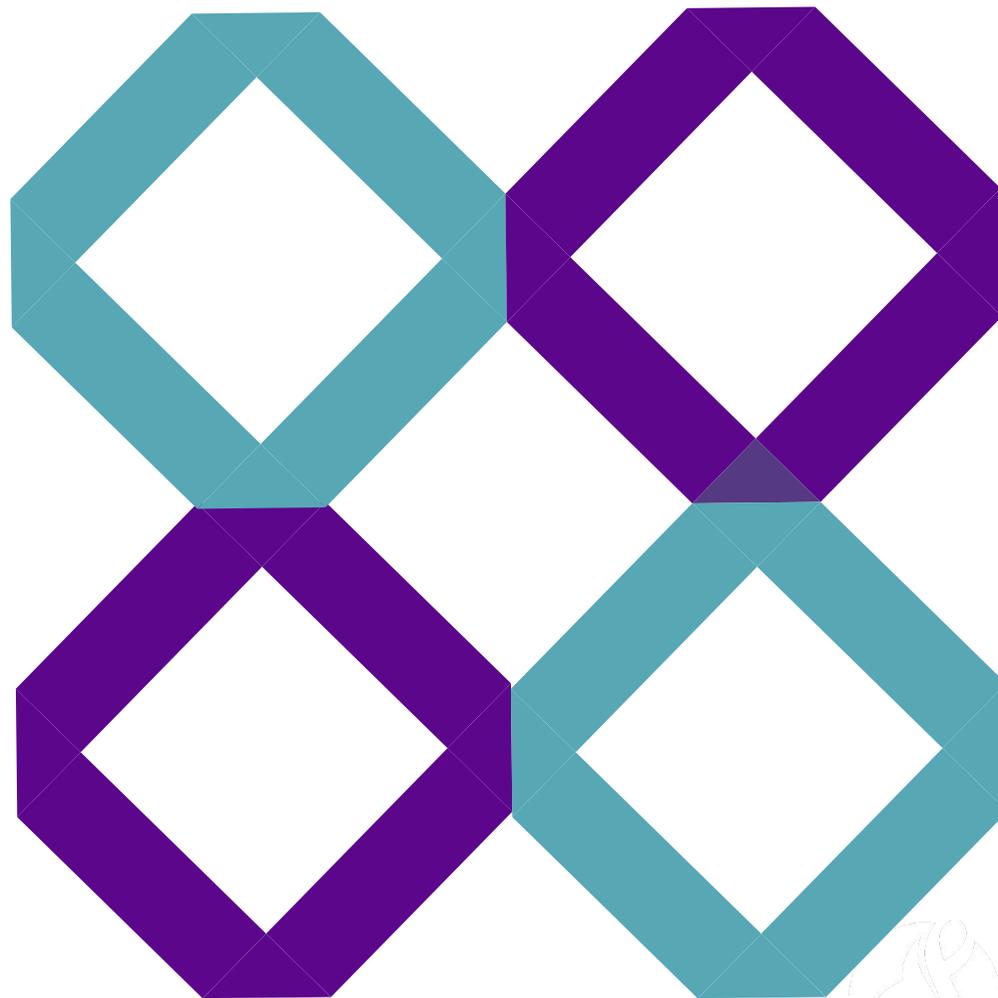
## Physical Therapist's Role

### 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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