

Liver Surveillance

Patient information Leaflet

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in alternative languages / formats on request.

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Na żądanie ta ulotka może zostać udostępniona
w innych językach/formatach.

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The aim of this leaflet is to provide information to patients diagnosed with chronic liver disease about the purpose of having HCC surveillance.

What is surveillance?

Due to your diagnosis of chronic liver disease your specialist has advised that you are enrolled onto a surveillance programme to monitor the health of your liver.

This is called the Liver Surveillance Programme.

The liver and liver damage

Your liver is your body's 'factory' carrying out hundreds of jobs that are vital to life.

It is very tough and is able to continue to function even when most of it is damaged, it can also repair itself.

When the cells of the liver have been damaged too badly they die, this is when permanent damage occurs.

- **Cirrhosis** is when inflammation and fibrosis has spread throughout the liver and permanently changes the shape and function of the liver. Even at this stage however, people can have no signs or symptoms of liver disease.

Of those people with cirrhosis, approximately 3% can go on to develop liver cancer.

Having liver disease does not mean you will develop a cancer but that the risk is increased.

Notes

What does surveillance involve?

Surveillance involves having a blood test and ultrasound scan every 6 months and a yearly follow up in clinic.

- **Alpha-fetoprotein (AFP)** is the main blood test we undertake. In some people who develop liver cancer, the AFP levels will rise, however, this is not the case for all liver cancers so we utilise other scans if this result is elevated.
- **Abdominal ultrasound scans** allow us to look at the texture, shape and blood flow of your liver as well as detecting any unusual lumps or bumps within the liver. If anything unusual is picked up on ultrasound, the images will be reviewed and a further more detailed scan may be arranged, either a CT scan or an MRI scan.

Why have surveillance?

People with scarred liver (cirrhosis) are at a increased risk of developing liver cancer (approximately 3% chance), the aim is to detect and treat early before you develop any signs.

We also like to ensure there is no general deterioration in your liver health including accumulation of fluid or development of portal hypertension.

If you cannot make your ultrasound appointment it is important to cancel it so the time slot can be used for someone else.

You can rebook your appointment at either Whiston or St Helens Hospital and we can offer evenings and weekends if midweek is unsuitable for your work/family commitments.

Unfortunately, if you do not attend two ultrasound appointments in a row without contacting the department or attempting to be rebooked, you will be discharged from the surveillance programme until you are able to ensure attendance to appointments.

What happens next?

You will receive your appointment to attend the ultrasound in the post.

We will arrange your bloods when we see you in clinic.

These two tests do not have to be done at the same time.

If you have concerns that your investigations are overdue, please contact our liver nurse helpline.

Depending on your fibroscan result, you may be invited to attend a camera test called a gastroscopy to rule out any other complications.

Your clinician will discuss this in your routine liver appointment.

You will be reviewed again in clinic by our liver nurse specialists a minimum of once a year to check you are feeling well with regard to your liver.

If your liver disease is stable, we may offer to review you via telephone or video consultation.

If this is something you would be interested in, let your specialist know and we can arrange this.

Contact us

Liver Nurse helpline: 0151 430 1981

Ultra Sound Booking: 0151 430 1233

Further Information

British Liver Trust: britishlivertrust.org.uk

Information line: 0800 652 7330