

Hepatoblastoma



Hepatoblastoma is a solid tumour cancer that develops in the soft tissue of the liver and accounts for almost half of liver cancers in children.

The liver is situated in the upper part of the abdomen and is the largest organ in the abdomen. The liver is very important as it performs vital bodily functions such as producing proteins that circulate in the blood. Some of these proteins are essential for maintaining the balance of bodily fluids and others help the blood clot and prevent excessive bleeding. The liver also breaks down waste products not used by the body and destroys harmful substances.

Types of Childhood Liver Cancer include:

- ⚠ **Hepatoblastoma:** This type of liver cancer generally occurs in children younger than 3 years of age and affects slightly more boys than girls.
- ⚠ **Hepatocellular Carcinoma:** This liver cancer mostly affects older children

Hepatoblastoma is a primary liver cancer, which means that it starts in the liver.

Causes of Hepatoblastoma

Although a lot of research has been done into the causes of Hepatoblastoma, as with most childhood cancers nobody has been able to determine what causes it.

Signs and Symptoms

Some of the typical signs and symptoms of Hepatoblastoma are:

- ⚠ Feeling nauseous or vomiting for no reason
- ⚠ Loss of appetite or unusual weight loss

Tests and Diagnosis

Hepatoblastoma can be diagnosed or staged using the following tests and procedures:

- ⚡ **Physical Exam and History:** The doctor will perform a physical examination, checking your child's general health as well as checking for anything unusual or signs of cancer, and a complete medical history will be taken
- ⚡ **Liver Function Tests:** A blood sample is checked to determine the quantities of various substances released into the blood by the liver.
- ⚡ **Serum Tumour Marker Test:** This procedure checks the quantity of a tumour marker substance in this case made by the liver tumour. It is called alpha-fetoprotein (AFP).
- ⚡ **Liver Function Tests:** This is a procedure where a blood sample is taken and checked to measure the amount of certain substances released by the liver into the bloodstream.
- ⚡ **A Biopsy:** Is only required if there is any doubt about the diagnosis of hepatoblastoma.

Treatment options

Treatment for hepatoblastoma will depend on the staging.

Treatment options consist of:

- ⚡ **Chemotherapy:** The use of a combination of anti-cancer drugs to destroy or shrink cancer cells is the preferred treatment, and will be the first treatment given.
- ⚡ **Surgery:** Surgery may be done a few weeks after the chemotherapy has finished removing any remaining tumour. Chemotherapy may be given again after surgery

Awareness Ribbon Colour

The awareness ribbon colour for Hepatoblastoma is Dark Green

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