The American Cancer Society estimates that in 2017 there will be 40,710 new cases of liver cancer, and 28,920 people will die of these cancers.

What Is the Liver?
The liver is a large organ in the human body, located on the upper right side of the body, behind the lower ribs. The liver does many jobs, including—

- Storing nutrients
- Removing waste products and worn-out cells from the blood
- Filtering and processing chemicals in food, alcohol, and medications
- Producing bile, a solution that helps digest fats and eliminate waste products

What Causes Liver Cancer?
Many liver cancer cases are related to the hepatitis B virus infection or hepatitis C virus infection. More than 4 million people are living with chronic hepatitis B or chronic hepatitis C in the United States. Most people don’t know they have the virus. Other behaviors and conditions that increase risk for getting liver cancer are—

- Heavy alcohol use
- Cirrhosis (scarring of the liver, which can also be caused by hepatitis and alcohol use)
- Obesity
- Diabetes
- Having hemochromatosis, a condition where the body takes up and stores more iron than it needs
- Eating foods that have aflatoxin (a fungus that can grow on foods, such as grains and nuts that have not been stored properly)

What Are the Symptoms of Liver Cancer?
In its early stages, liver cancer may not have symptoms that can be seen or felt. However, as the cancer grows larger, people may notice one or more of these common symptoms. It’s important to remember that these symptoms could also be caused by other health conditions. If you have any of these symptoms, talk to your doctor. Liver cancer symptoms may include—

- Discomfort in the upper abdomen on the right side
- A swollen abdomen
- A hard lump on the right side just below the rib cage
- Pain near the right shoulder blade or in the back
- Jaundice (yellowing of the skin and whites of the eyes)
- Easy bruising or bleeding
- Unusual tiredness
- Nausea and vomiting
- Loss of appetite
- Weight loss for no known reason

How Can I Reduce My Risk for Liver Cancer?
New liver cancer cases and deaths are on the rise in the United States. Rates of new liver cancer cases went up 38% from 2003 to 2012. Almost 23,000 people died from liver cancer in 2012. This is a 56% increase in deaths since 2003. Men died from liver cancer at more than twice the rate of women. You can lower your risk of getting liver cancer in the following ways—

- Get vaccinated against hepatitis B infection
  The hepatitis B vaccine is recommended for all infants at birth and for adults who may be at increased risk
- Get tested for hepatitis C, and get treated if you have it
- Avoid drinking too much alcohol
- Get vaccinated against hepatitis B infection
  The hepatitis B vaccine is recommended for all infants at birth and for adults who may be at increased risk
- Get tested for hepatitis C, and get treated if you have it
- Avoid drinking too much alcohol

The liver is in the upper abdomen near the stomach, intestines, gallbladder, and pancreas. The liver has four lobes. Two lobes are on the front and two small lobes (not shown) are on the back of the liver.
Statistics
In the United States in 2013 (the most recent year numbers are available)—

• 21,143 men and 8,330 women were diagnosed with liver cancer.*
• 16,300 men and 7,732 women died from liver cancer.*
• Among men, Asian/Pacific Islander men had the highest rates of getting liver cancer (19.1 per 100,000 men), followed by Hispanic men (19.0), black men (17.0), American Indian/Alaska Native men (12.8), and white men (10.8).
• Among women, Hispanic women had the highest rates of getting liver cancer (7.5 per 100,000 women), followed by Asian/Pacific Islander women (6.8), American Indian/Alaska Native women (6.1), black women (5.3), and white women (3.9).
• Among Asian/Pacific Islander men, liver cancer was the fourth most common cancer and the second most common cause of cancer death.
• Among Asian/Pacific Islander women, liver cancer was the tenth most common cancer and the fifth most common cause of cancer death.

*Incidence counts cover about 99% of the U.S. population; death counts cover about 100% of the U.S. population. Use caution when comparing incidence and death counts. Hispanic origin is not mutually exclusive from race categories (white, black, Asian/Pacific Islander, American Indian/Alaska Native).


For more information call:
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