

Treatment options for secondary liver cancer

Secondary liver cancer is when cancer that has started in another part of the body spreads to the liver.

Our multi-disciplinary team (MDT) will discuss and agree a recommended plan of treatment and this will be discussed with you at your next outpatient appointment. There are different ways of treating secondary liver cancer and the best choice for you will depend on:

- where the cancer is in the liver
- your general health
- whether the cancer has also spread to other parts of the body.

Your specialist nurse will give you more detailed written information about the treatment that has been planned for you. The different treatment options are:

Surgery

Depending on where the cancer is in the liver, it may be possible to have an operation to remove it. The operation is called a liver resection. Your doctor may recommend that you have surgery alone or together with chemotherapy.

Liver surgery is carried out at the Chelsea branch of The Royal Marsden by a specialist liver surgeon. After surgery, you will stay on the Critical Care Unit for a short time before returning to your ward. On average, patients are usually in hospital for between 10–14 days.

Radio Frequency ablation (RFA)

This treatment uses heat given through a special needle electrode to destroy the cancer. It is only usually recommended for cancers which are less than 5cm (2 inches) in diameter. This procedure is sometimes recommended as either treatment on its own or in combination with liver resection. Patients are usually in hospital for between three and four days.

Chemotherapy

Sometimes, the cancer cannot be removed by surgery because of where it is and its size. It may occasionally be possible to shrink the cancer with chemotherapy in order for surgery to go ahead. However, if the cancer has spread to other areas of the body as well as the liver, surgery will not be possible. This will be explained to you and an alternative treatment plan will be considered, such as chemotherapy alone.



Contact details

Your Consultant

Name:

Tel:

Registrar

Tel: 020 7352 8171 Ext 1783

Your Clinical Nurse Specialist (Key Worker)

Name:

Tel:

Alternatively, please contact:

The Royal Marsden Macmillan Hotline: 020 8915 6899

(available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week)

