Managing Symptoms of Liver Cancer Naturally

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Natural Remedies for Liver Cancer Symptoms

Liver cancer will cause you to have symptoms of nausea, vomiting, fatigue, constipation, and pain. Sometimes, cancer treatment used to destroy cancer cells also causes unpleasant side effects.

Your doctor will prescribe medications to treat some of your side effects and symptoms, but considering all the aggressive treatments you are already taking, you may want to consider natural remedies for liver cancer.

Nausea and Vomiting

If you are undergoing chemotherapy or radiation treatments, your doctor may prescribe medication to prevent and treat nausea and vomiting. You can also try over-the-counter (OTC) anti-nausea medications, but be sure to check with your doctor if you plan on taking these.

But if you do not want to take medication, you can try natural routes to manage nausea.

Be sure you are drinking plenty of water to prevent dehydration and dizziness. Eat small meals instead of heavier meals, and avoid foods that may make you sick, such as fried, spicy, and salty foods.

Sucking on peppermint candies and drinking ginger ale or ginger tea can help minimize nausea. Acupressure bands used for motion sickness may also help.

If you are vomiting, get plenty of rest and drink lots of clear liquids. Avoid juice, milk products, alcohol and soda. Once you are able to eat again, start with clear soups and mild foods, such as gelatin, toast and crackers.

Try to stay away from things that make nausea worse, such as bright lights and odors. You should report vomiting lasting more the 24 hours to your doctor, and other symptoms such as chest pain, confusion, restlessness, and severe stomach pain.

Fatigue

Fatigue is one of the most common symptoms of liver cancer and it can be a tough one. Fatigue affects more than 80 percent of patients receiving chemotherapy and/or radiotherapy, this according to researchers out of the Joan Karnell Cancer Center in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.

Treatments are not the only reason you experience fatigue with liver cancer. A common symptom of liver cancer is fatigue, but anemia (as result of losing too many red blood cells), pain, emotions (stress, anxiety, and depression), lack of sleep, poor nutrition (especially if you cannot keep food down), inactivity, and hormonal changes (from treatment) are also culprits that cause and worsen fatigue.

You may not want to report your fatigue to your doctor because you may believe that nothing can be done, but that isn't necessarily true. Fatigue and its adverse effects can be minimized without medication.

Fatigue can be managed by increasing your physical activity. In fact, exercise can help you manage other cancer related difficulties, including sleep problems, depression, anxiety and cognitive impairment.

Working with a nutrition counselor may also help. Due to appetite difficulties, nausea and vomiting, you may not be eating well and an expert can help you to figure out how to get enough calories, fluids and nutrients to give you energy and reduce fatigue.

And living with liver cancer causes plenty of stress and feeling overwhelmed and anxious depletes physical and mental energy. A mental health professional could help you to manage worries, feelings, and anxieties with cognitive therapy, relaxation, talk therapy, and social support.

It is also important to rest, especially after activities requiring a lot of energy and let others help you with chores, cooking and getting to appointments. Practice good sleep habits, such as going to bed on time at night and getting up at the same time every morning, taking only short naps, and limiting caffeine and exercise too close to bedtime.

Make sure you are taking all your medications and your doctor's advice. And most importantly, keep yourself distracted. Do the things you enjoy, such as listening to your favorite music, reading, watching funny movies or spending time with friends and loved ones.

Constipation

Constipation may be a side effect of your treatment or it may be a symptom of your liver cancer. Symptoms of constipation are a reduced number of bowel movements, hard stools, bloating, gas and abdominal cramping.

Liver cancer patients may experience constipation because of their pain medications and chemotherapy treatments. Decreased activity and changes in diet are also to blame.

You can minimize constipation by increasing the fiber in your diet. Raw fruits and vegetables, whole grains, dates and some nuts are fiber rich foods. You should also increase your fluid intake and avoid dairy.

Get regular exercise and go the bathroom when you have the urge to go. Ask your doctor about pain medications that do not cause constipation.

Pain

Chances are having liver cancer means living with cramping, aching and radiating pain in your back, shoulders, and abdomen. Pain can be treated with medication, but you may not want to take more medication.

A number of natural, non-medicinal treatments can help you with pain relief. These strategies include complementary therapies like relaxation breathing and guided imagery, specific herbs, hypnosis, prayer, meditation, massage, acupressure and acupuncture, chiropractic care, heat and cold application and therapeutic exercises (including physical therapy).

Seeking Medical Help for Symptoms

Symptoms and side effects may be the norm for people living with liver cancer and undergoing cancer treatments. Nausea, vomiting, fatigue, pain and other physical distress may not warrant a trip to the emergency room or a call to your doctor, but you should pay attention to changes in pain and other symptoms.

If things seem to be getting worse or you are struggling to manage symptoms, it is important to seek out medical attention right away.

If you have symptoms like a fever above 101 degrees lasting more than one hour, confusion or other changes in mental status, breathing difficulties, bleeding, swelling in the arms or legs, increased and intolerable pain, trouble swallowing, neck, face or tongue swelling, and uncontrollable diarrhea, constipation or vomiting, you should go to the nearest emergency room.

And after you have been to the ER and had your symptoms treated, you should still follow-up with your cancer doctor.