

Ready to start planning your care? Call us at [800-525-2225](tel:800-525-2225) to make an appointment.

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Memorial Sloan Kettering
Cancer Center

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Medical oncologists Leonard Saltz (left) and David Paul Kelsen are part of a team of experts experienced in diagnosing and treating liver metastases.

Liver metastases are cancerous tumors that have spread ([metastasized](#)) to the liver from another part of the body. These tumors can appear shortly after the original tumor develops, or even months or years later.

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Call [800-525-2225](tel:800-525-2225)

Available Monday through Friday, 8 a.m. to 6 p.m. (Eastern time)

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This information is about cancer that has spread to the liver.

[Learn about primary liver cancer, which starts in the liver.](#)

The liver is the largest organ inside your body. It's located below the right lung and is divided into two lobes (the right and the left). The liver is made of cells called hepatocytes.

The liver has several important functions. These include:

- absorbing and breaking down nutrients
- making bile (a fluid that helps digest fats)
- filtering and removing toxic substances from the blood
- producing proteins that help stop bleeding from a cut or an injury

Most liver metastases start as cancer in the [colon](#) or [rectum](#). Up to 70 percent of people with [colorectal cancer](#) eventually develop liver metastases. This happens in part because the blood supply from the intestines is connected directly to the liver through a large blood vessel called the portal vein.

Although much less common, liver metastases can also start as [breast cancer](#), [esophageal cancer](#), [stomach cancer](#), [pancreatic cancer](#), [lung cancer](#), [kidney cancer](#), and [skin cancer](#).

In the United States and Europe, secondary liver cancer is much more common than [primary liver cancer](#), which starts in the liver.

How We Care for You

The [symptoms of liver metastases](#) are often vague and hard to identify yourself. If you have any concerns, contact your doctor. Memorial Sloan Kettering has a team of specialists who are very experienced in diagnosing and treating the condition.

Our goal is to provide treatment options that give you the very best possible quality of life and survival rate.

MSK surgeons work closely with interventional radiologists in using powerful imaging tests — such as CT, ultrasound, or MRI — to guide treatments directly to where your tumor is located. We can often destroy tumors with minimally invasive techniques, such as ablation and embolization.

Through [genetic testing](#) of tumors, we learn about the molecular blueprint of your particular cancer and customize a treatment plan for you. Another option is to combine surgery with hepatic arterial chemotherapy, which delivers the drug directly to the liver.

We also offer a range of [support programs](#) that can help you and your loved ones manage the challenges and stress of life during and after treatment for liver cancer.

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