

Liver cancer Essential TNM

Key points for liver cancer staging

1. The classification is for hepatocellular carcinomas and aims to divide cancers into those that are operable (localized or limited) and those that are not.
2. Metastatic disease includes ascites with evidence of malignant spread to the peritoneum.
3. Regional lymph nodes are the hilar, hepatic (along the proper hepatic artery), periportal (along the portal vein), inferior phrenic, and caval nodes.
4. Look for tumour extension into a major branch of the portal or hepatic vein, direct invasion of adjacent organs other than the gallbladder (including the diaphragm), or perforation of the visceral peritoneum; the tumour is advanced (T4).
5. If it involves only the liver (or the liver and the gallbladder), look for the number of tumours in the liver; if none measures more than 5 cm, it is limited, otherwise it is advanced (T3).

Fig. 3. Liver cancer Essential TNM flow chart. A, advanced extension; L, localized extension; M, distant metastasis; R, regional lymph nodes; TNM, Tumour, Node, Metastasis.

