Hep B and C Treatment

New research shows that treating these viruses can reduce liver cancer risk.

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Over years or decades, chronic hepatitis B or C can lead to liver cirrhosis and hepatocellular carcinoma (HCC), the most common type of liver cancer. But treating these viruses can reduce the risk, researchers reported at The Liver Meeting in November.

In two Phase III studies comparing Viread (tenofovir disoproxil fumarate) versus Vemlidy (tenofovir alafenamide) for hepatitis B, both medications stopped viral replication. Over three to five years, 1.0% of Vemlidy recipients and 1.9% of Viread recipients developed HCC—58% less than expected in untreated people. Another analysis of French hep B patients found that people who took Baraclude (entecavir) had about the same low liver cancer risk as those who used Viread.

Hepatitis C can now be cured with direct-acting antiviral (DAA) therapy taken for eight to 12 weeks. Another study showed that people with liver cancer who were cured of hep C have a lower risk of both liver-related and all-cause death. Five-year survival rates were 88% in the cured group versus 66% in the untreated group. Even people with advanced HCC had a high hep C cure rate and saw a survival benefit.

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