

Easy B Facts

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What is AFP?

To find out if you have a liver tumor or cancer, a blood test will look for a protein in your blood called alpha-fetoprotein (or AFP).

If you are infected with HBV your doctor should test AFP levels every six to 12 months to find out if you are at risk for liver cancer.

AFP is a protein that is found at high levels in the bloodstream when liver tumors are present. A normal AFP level is between 8 and 10 mg/ml. When cancer is present, AFP levels can reach 200 to 500 mg/ml.

But the AFP test is not a perfect test for liver cancer. Only 60 percent of people (6 out of 10 people) with liver cancer have elevated or above normal AFP levels, so the other 40 percent (4 out of 10) of hepatitis patients with liver cancer have normal AFP levels. That is why it is important that hepatitis B patients also get regular ultrasound examinations (a type of x-ray) of their liver, which can also find liver tumors.

It Is Important to Remember:

- An AFP test should be performed every six to 12 months partly because the size of liver tumors can double in six months!
- Only 60 percent of people with liver cancer have elevated AFP levels, which is why ultrasound exams are also important.
- The higher your AFP level, the greater your risk of liver cancer.



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