

Liver Hemangioma

A hemangioma is the most common benign tumor of the liver. It may be seen in as many as 1 in 15 individuals. It usually develops before birth and consists of a small collection of blood vessels that increase in size as the liver grows. Hemangiomas are commonly found in the third, fourth and fifth decades of life. The tumor affects women predominantly. Hemangiomas may increase in size with pregnancy or with the administration of hormones such as estrogen.

The great majority of hemangiomas are small and asymptomatic. Larger hemangiomas (> 4 cms in diameter) or multiple hemangiomas can produce symptoms. Abdominal pain or discomfort is the most common complaint; however a feeling of fullness, nausea and vomiting can also occur. Rarely, hemangiomas can clot, bleed or rupture causing severe abdominal pain. These lesions maybe removed by surgery or may have their blood supply interrupted leading to death of the tumor. However, the vast majority of hemangiomas require no treatment apart from observation. To date, there is no well-documented report of malignant transformation of a hemangioma.