



What is it?

Thermal ablation is an image guided treatment for some liver cancers where a needle is placed through the skin into a liver tumour. The needle can then either heat or freeze the cancer cells, destroying them. This is an effective treatment option for patients who might have difficulty with surgery and those whose tumours are less than 3cm.

Who is it for?

Thermal ablation can be an effective treatment for some patients who are unsuitable for surgical resection.

How is it done?

This procedure is performed by an interventional radiologist (IR) using ultrasound and CT guidance. The procedure is performed under general anaesthetic or deep sedation.

A very small nick may be made in your skin to make it easier to pass the needle into your liver.

Using imaging-guidance, the needle will be passed through the skin and advanced into the site of the tumour. Once the needle is in place, the needle tip is either heated or cooled, depending on the chosen technique, causing the tumour cells to die. The dead cancer cells are eventually replaced by scar tissue.

At the end of the procedure, the needle will be removed and the opening in the skin is covered with a dressing. No stitches are needed. The entire procedure is usually completed within 1-2 hours.

How will I feel afterwards

You will rest in the recovery area for 2 hours until the anaesthetic has worn off, after which you will be transferred to a ward bed. Most people can go home the same day or next day.

Some people may experience pain immediately afterwards, which can be controlled by pain medication given either orally or via a drip. You may also feel fatigued afterwards.

Most patients are well enough to go home either the same day or the following day. You should be able to resume your usual activities within a few days.

What are the risks?

Some of the risks involved include:

- pain
- bleeding
- infection

Your doctor will discuss these risks with you in detail before your operation.

Follow up

You will receive a phone call within 1 week from our nurse manager. You will also be scheduled for follow up imaging and clinic appointment with your interventional radiologist about 4- 6 weeks.

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