

## Beaver tail liver: An unusual anatomic variant

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### Abstract

The beaver tail liver is an anatomical variant of the liver that is still poorly recognised. It corresponds to an elongation of the left lobe of the liver that surrounds the spleen. It is important to bear this in mind, especially in the event of trauma, to ensure a better assessment of the lesion and appropriate management. We report here a case of incidental finding of a beavertail liver.

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### Clinical image presentation

We present here the case of a 34-year-old woman, recently diagnosed with infiltrating ductal breast carcinoma, who presented to our department for management. A thoracic-abdominal-pelvic CT scan performed as part of the extension work-up revealed incidentally an enlargement of the left lobe of the liver surrounding the spleen (Figure 1), giving the appearance of a beavertail liver.

### Description

Beavertail liver is a rare anatomical variant of the liver that is still poorly known. It corresponds to a lateral extension of the left liver lobe that contacts or surrounds the spleen [1]. It takes its name from its resemblance to the beaver tail. Although only a few rare cases of beavertail liver have been reported in the literature, and these were discovered by chance on ultrasound or CT scan, it is important to be familiar with this anatomical variant in view of its clinical and therapeutic implications.

This radiological image is often difficult to interpret, due to the similar density and echogenicity between the liver and spleen and the unexpected presence of a left hepatic lobe in the left posterior subphrenic space, which explains why it can easily go missing or be misinterpreted [1,2].

In the context of trauma, injuries affecting the left hypochondrium and leading to splenic lesions may also cause damage to the elongated lobe of the liver [3]. As well, this elongated left lobe can be easily confused with perisplenitis, splenic haematoma, subscapular haematoma or splenic mass [1,2].

Radiologists, clinicians and surgeons need to be aware of its existence and its clinical implications, especially in emergency medicine, in order to avoid unnecessary surgery.

**Conflicts of interest:** No conflict of interest.

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**Figure 1:** Abdominal CT scan in axial section showing an elongation of the left liver lobe (arrow) which surrounds the spleen giving the appearance of Beaver Tail liver.