# Health Benefits of Curing Hepatitis C

May 8, 2017 By Liz Highleyman

Successful treatment of hepatitis C virus (HCV) has multiple benefits. Over time, chronic HCV infection can lead to serious liver complications, including cirrhosis, liver cancer, liver failure and the need for a liver transplant.

As the liver tries to repair itself, healthy liver cells are replaced with scar tissue, a process known as fibrosis. If left untreated, it can progress to cirrhosis, a condition in which scar tissue blocks the normal flow of blood through the liver and the organ can no longer carry out its vital functions.

In the most severe cases, people develop decompensated liver disease or liver failure, with symptoms such as internal bleeding, abdominal fluid buildup and brain impairment. Once this occurs, a liver transplant may be the only option.

Curing hep C slows or halts liver disease progression; often, some of the damage to the liver can be reversed. Liver function improves, and the risk of liver cancer and liver-related death decreases. Some people with severe liver disease may no longer require a transplant. Successful treatment can also help with non-liver-specific problems such as fatigue, diabetes and cardiovascular disease.

It’s important not to wait too long to be treated. Not only is treatment more difficult in cases of severe liver disease, but also, the damage often cannot be completely reversed. People who have progressed to cirrhosis remain at higher risk for liver cancer and other complications even after being cured. Experts recommend people start hep C treatment early, before they develop advanced liver disease.

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