What to Avoid With Hepatitis C and Liver Disease

May 28, 2021 By Connie M. Welch

Learning what to avoid with hepatitis C and liver disease is the first step in helping your liver. The liver performs many functions that are vital to your health.

It's primary function is to process everything you eat, drink, breathe and absorb through your skin. It serves your body like an engine, filter, refinery plant and storage house. It converts nutrients from your food for vital functions for muscles, energy, hormones, clotting and immune factors.

It stores vitamins, minerals (including iron) and sugars, regulates fat stores, and controls the production and excretion of cholesterol. It also produces bile which helps you digest food and absorb nutrients.

Other functions include detoxifying poisonous substances and metabolizing alcohol. It also aids your immune system by helping you resist infection and removes bacteria from your blood. It's your body's powerhouse.

When liver function is compromised the whole body suffers.

What to avoid with hepatitis C and liver disease:
Alcohol
Alcohol for someone with hepatitis C and liver damage accelerates liver damage causing a further break down of liver function. Alcohol for someone with hepatitis C and liver disease is like gasoline on a fire.

Illegal Drugs
Recreational drugs are damaging to your liver. For example, marijuana may accelerate liver scarring and cause further break down of liver function. Needle injection of substances can also raise your risk factor of contracting other infections, viruses, and do further damage to your liver.

Environmental Pollutants/Toxins
Toxins can injure your liver cells. Avoid direct contact with chemicals from cleaning products, insecticides, fumes from paint thinners and aerosol sprays.

Smoking

Smoking, even being exposed to second hand smoke is damaging to your liver. It increases your risk for cancer and cirrhosis (severe scarring) of the liver. The toxic chemicals in tobacco can cause inflammation and lead to further liver damage like cirrhosis.

Smoking also promotes the production of cytokines, chemicals which cause more inflammation and damage liver cells.

Over the Counter & Prescription Medications
Medications, you take pass through your liver. Your liver is responsible for processing all substances.

The American Liver Foundation states it's important to understand exactly how you should be taking all medications in order to avoid putting undue stress on your liver.

Be discerning when taking vitamins, minerals and supplements as well as over the counter and prescription medications. Certain cholesterol medications and prescription pain killers and others can affect raising liver enzymes. Be sure to talk to your physician and pharmacist about all medications and your liver condition prior to using them. A good rule of thumb to remember, everything you take effects your liver.

Talk to your doctor before taking:

- Acetaminophen (acetaminophen is in many cold and flu medications. It's also in most painkillers labeled "non-aspirin."
- NSAID's (ibuprofen, naprosyn, etc.)
- Sleeping pills or tranquilizers

Talk to your liver specialist about what is safe for you to take according to your liver condition.

Vitamins, Minerals, & Herbal Supplements
Vitamins, minerals and herbal supplements if taken correctly can play a part in good health, but when taken incorrectly can harm your liver.

Be very careful when taking herbal and alternative liver supplements. Herbal supplements are not regulated and therefore claims and content amounts cannot be verified. They have not gone through medical and research clinical trial studies to confirm their claims.

Certain herbs can be dangerous and toxic to your liver and can increase liver damage. Just because something says it's natural or organic, doesn't mean it's safe to take. Talk to your doctor before taking anything.

Some common herbal supplements that can be risky for your liver are:

- Chaparral
- Jin Bu Huan
- Germander
- Comfrey, Mate, and Gordolobo Yeba Tea’s
- Mistletoe
- Skullcap
- Pennyroyal (squaw mint oil)
- Margosa oil
- Kava
- Yohimbe

This list is not exhaustive. Some weight loss products can also be harmful to the liver.

Certain vitamins which are fat soluble can be harmful if taken in excess amounts as well as certain mineral supplements. Talk to your doctor before taking:

- Iron
- Vitamin A
- Vitamin D
- Vitamin E
- Vitamin K

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