



Hepatitis C and Cirrhosis: Symptoms and What Helps

September 6, 2017 By [Connie M. Welch](#)

Hepatitis C can bring on complications such as cirrhosis if the virus continues to do liver damage. Treatment for Hepatitis C is very important in order to eliminate the virus from doing further liver damage.

If you or a loved one don't know if you have hepatitis C, ask your doctor to be tested and find out for sure. The Hepatitis C blood test is not part of regular blood work, you have to request it. Sometimes even cirrhosis symptoms don't show up until extensive liver damage is done. Be safe, get tested for Hepatitis C, and seek treatment.

Symptoms of Cirrhosis:

- *Loss of appetite
- *Fatigue
- *Nausea
- *Weight loss
- *Abdominal pain
- *Spider-like blood vessels
- *Severe itching
- *Confusion, memory issues or physical impairment
- *Swelling in the abdomen or legs

Complications of Cirrhosis:

- *Bleeding or bruise easily
- *Jaundice, a yellow discoloration of the skin and whites of the eyes
- *Gallstones
- *Water retention and painful swelling in the legs (edema) and abdomen (ascites)
- *Severe itchy skin

- *Blood vessels leading to your liver can back up causing blockage and burst (varices)
- *The patient can become sensitive to medications and their side effects
- *Develop insulin resistance and type-2 diabetes
- *Toxins can build up in your brain from high ammonia levels since the liver can no longer process and flush toxins from the liver, this build up can cause HE (hepatic encephalopathy, causing problems with concentration, memory, sleeping or other mental or physical functions.

Symptoms and conditions of cirrhosis can continue to point the patient can experience liver failure and slip into a coma which is life threatening.

But once the patient has been diagnosed with cirrhosis, there is medical treatment and lifestyle changes can help conditions from getting worse and relieve some symptoms. It is very important to take care of the healthy liver tissue that is left.

There are two types of cirrhosis, compensated and decompensated.

Compensated cirrhosis means the patient has not become jaundice and has not developed varices or ascites.

Decompensated cirrhosis means the patient has developed jaundice, ascites, variceal hemorrhage, and hepatic encephalopathy.

Esophageal varices sometimes form when blood flow to your liver is blocked, most often by scar tissue in the liver caused by liver disease. The blood flow begins to back up, increasing pressure within the large vein (portal vein) that carries blood to your liver.

This pressure (portal hypertension) forces the blood to seek other pathways through smaller veins, such as those in the lowest part of the esophagus. These thin-walled veins balloon with the added blood. Sometimes the veins can rupture and bleed.

Ascites is accumulation of fluid buildup in the abdomen or legs.

These factors help make a huge difference in living with cirrhosis:

- *Early diagnosis
- *Treatment for Hepatitis B, C, D, or Alcohol, NASH (Nonalcoholic steatohepatitis) or other liver disease
- *Regular medical check-ups
- *Medications given by your physician to reduce ammonia levels and help reduce complications
- *Regular tests
- * Maintaining a healthy lifestyle (eat a healthy diet based on your doctor's recommendations for your liver condition), and exercise regularly

- *Limit salt in your diet to prevent or reduce fluid buildup
- *Avoid processed foods
- *Avoid eating raw shellfish or uncooked fish of any type
- *Do not drink alcohol, drugs or exposure to harmful chemicals or substances
- *Talk to your doctor about all medications, vitamins and supplements you take and find out what is safe for your liver condition
- *Make a list of questions and take them to your doctor's visit. Take someone with you to doctor's appointments that can help you take notes from your medical team's discussion, test results and recommendations.
- *Make sure to ask questions if you don't understand a term or your condition.
- *Ask your physician's advice on if they recommend you to be put on a liver transplant list, and your MELD score and what that means
- *Ask your physician about diet recommendations for your liver condition and/or to be referred to a licensed dietitian or nutritionist that is familiar with your type of cirrhosis.
- *Get the Hepatitis A and Hepatitis B vaccine (there is no vaccine for Hepatitis C)
- *If you have Hepatitis B or C, or D seek treatment in order to stop further liver damage from occurring
- * If you cannot stop drinking or deal with substance abuse seek treatment with AA and medical treatment
- *Practice safe sex
- *Do not share needles, razors, toothbrushes, nail clippers or other personal items with others
- *Get Support from family, friends, and support group with others who share your condition. Don't suffer in silence and isolation, reach out for support. Support can equip and help you in great ways.
- *If you have a family member or friend of someone with liver disease or perhaps you are their caregiver, seek information and support as the caregiver. Information and support are powerful tools to help you.

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