Liver Health: Yet Another Reason to Avoid Alcohol

July 2, 2018 By Lucinda K. Porter RN

We pretty much know that we should avoid alcohol if we a have liver disease. Those of us whose hepatitis C is cured may be wondering if we can resume moderate drinking. If you have cirrhosis or advanced fibrosis, continue to abstain. If you had minimal liver damage prior to treatment, there hasn't good research on this, so experts tend to advise against alcohol consumption. The thinking behind this is that it took a lot to cure hepatitis C, so it makes sense to do everything you can to protect your liver. Some doctors say it is all right to have a drink when the occasion is special, such as at the wedding of a family member. If you'd like to drink, talk to your health care provider about this.

However, if you have nonalcoholic fatty liver disease (NAFLD), it may be best to avoid alcohol. A large study published in Hepatology presented convincing data to support this. ("Interaction between alcohol consumption and metabolic syndrome in predicting severe liver disease in the general population" by Fredrik Aberg, et al. June 2018) This team of researchers found that even moderate alcohol drinking (less than 20 g of alcohol/day or 2 drinks per day) is a significant risk for the worsening of liver disease in the general population even when average alcohol intake was within the limits currently defining NAFLD.

So this 4th of July, put aside the beer, reach for a tall glass of sugar-free ice tea, and toast to freedom, whether it is the patriotic sort of freedom, or freedom to walk around in a healthier body.

Click here for more information about alcohol and hepatitis C. Here is a link to information about alcoholic liver disease.

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