

Living With Cirrhosis: Your Daily Guide

Medical-Surgical · Gastrointestinal (GI)

Cirrhosis means scar tissue has replaced healthy parts of your liver, so it cannot do its jobs well. These steps protect your liver and help you catch problems early.

Protect your liver

- **Do not drink any alcohol.** This includes beer and wine.
- Take no more than 2,000 mg of acetaminophen (Tylenol) a day, unless your provider gives you another limit.
- Do not take ibuprofen (Advil, Motrin) or naproxen (Aleve).
- Ask before taking sleep aids, herbs, or any new medicine.

Watch for fluid buildup

- Eat less than 2,000 mg of sodium (salt) a day. Limit canned, deli, and fast foods.
- Take your water pills as directed.
- Weigh yourself every morning after using the bathroom.
- Measure around your belly at the belly button. Write both down.
- Your limits: weight _____ belly _____.

Take your lactulose

- Lactulose removes ammonia, a waste that causes confusion.
- **Aim for 2 to 3 soft stools every day.**
- Do not stop it on your own, even when your stools are soft.

Eat enough protein

- Your body needs protein. Do not cut it out.
- Eat small meals often. Have a snack at bedtime.
- Do not eat raw oysters or other raw shellfish.

Prevent infection and bleeding

- Ask about hepatitis A and B shots.
- Use a soft toothbrush and an electric razor.
- Do not strain on the toilet.

Call your provider today if you have

- Weight or belly size above your limit
- More swelling in your belly or legs
- Fever or belly pain
- Fewer than 2 stools a day, or watery diarrhea

Call 911 or your local emergency number if you have

- Vomiting blood or what looks like coffee grounds
- Black, sticky, or bloody stools
- New confusion, or you are very sleepy or hard to wake

This handout supports, not replaces, advice from your own nurse or doctor.

Online: nclxpathace.com/patient-education/cirrhosis-living-with/patient

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