**Important Definitions You Should Know**

**Chronic Hepatitis C:** disease of the liver that remains throughout the course of the individual's life.

**Fibrosis:** mild to moderate scarring of the liver.

**Cirrhosis:** the end result of damage to the cells in the liver. Cirrhosis can be caused by many things, including viral hepatitis or alcohol, or both.

**Liver Biopsy:** a procedure in which a small piece of liver is removed with a needle and examined to find out exactly how much liver damage is present. The biopsy is rated on a scale from 0 (normal liver) to 4 (cirrhosis).

**Advanced Liver Disease:** symptoms of advanced liver disease include: fatigue, difficulty concentrating, yellow jaundice, fluid in the abdomen, bleeding, and poor blood clotting.

**Liver Cancer:** a type of cancer, known as hepatocellular carcinoma, that develops in the liver as a result of viral hepatitis, cirrhosis, or alcohol.

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**What Happens to People with Hepatitis C?**

For every 100 people with hepatitis C, 15 people are able to get rid of the virus by their own immune system. **85 will develop chronic, or long-term, infection.**

Of these 85 people, the virus causes only minor liver damage in 66 of them. **17 people develop cirrhosis** and may have symptoms of advanced liver disease. **2 people will develop liver cancer.**

**Your liver health can be related to choices you make about your lifestyle.**

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**Alcohol's Effect on Treatment**

**People who don't drink before starting antiviral therapy tend to have better response rates than drinkers.**

**12 Heavy Drinkers**

In one study, infrequent or non-drinkers successfully responded to antiviral treatment* **3 times more often** than heavy drinkers.

Out of 36 people who drank heavily prior to treatment, **only 3 people, or 1 in 12, cleared the virus.**

Another study found that people who drink soon before antiviral treatment **drop out 50% more often** than those who abstain for a period of time.
Alcohol Use
...and Liver Health

Alcohol use accelerates the decline to cirrhosis

- Alcohol use accelerates the decline to cirrhosis
- Light/Non-Drinkers
- Some Damage
- A Lot of Damage
- Cirrhosis
- Heavy Drinkers

...and Viral Load

Heavy alcohol use weakens your immune system

- Viral load is how much virus can be found in a test tube of blood. It is affected by many things, including alcohol.
- This study found that people who drank more tended to have more virus in their bloodstream.

Viral Load (in millions)

<table>
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<th>2</th>
<th>7</th>
<th>12</th>
<th>15</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Viral Load</td>
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<td>20</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>150</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

- One Standard Drink: 12 oz. Beer 4 oz. Wine 1.5 oz. Liquor

For More Information

VA Hepatitis C Website
http://www.hepatitis.va.gov

Alcohol Screening
http://www.alcoholscreening.org

Alcoholics Anonymous
http://www.alcoholics-anonymous.org

American Liver Foundation
http://www.liverfoundation.org

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
http://www.cdc.gov/hepatitis

Center for Substance Abuse Treatment
http://csat.samhsa.gov

National Institute on Alcohol Abuse/Alcoholism
http://www.niaaa.nih.gov

References