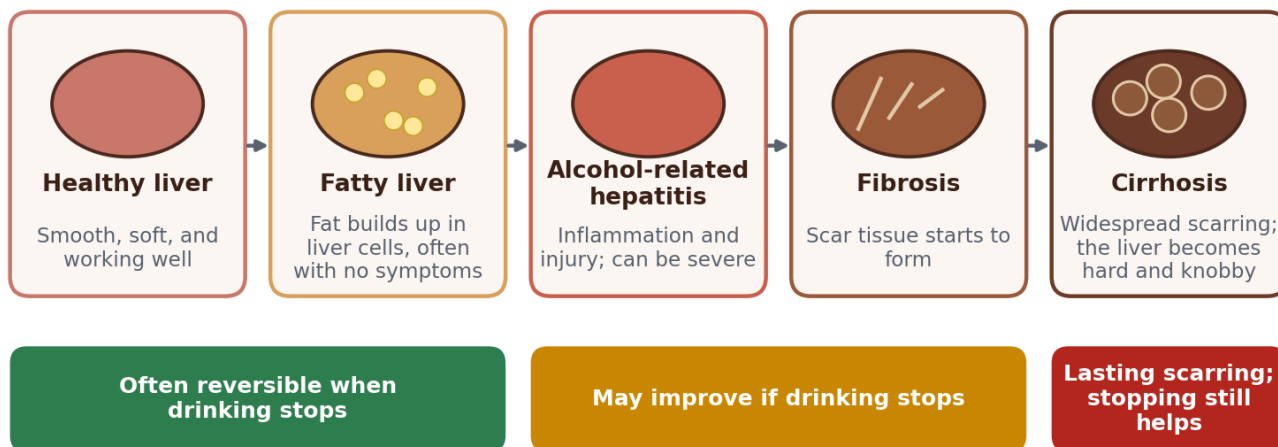


ALCOHOL AND YOUR LIVER

How alcohol harms the liver, and what you can do about it

Your liver breaks down almost all the alcohol you drink. That work produces harmful by-products that can inflame and scar liver cells. **Alcohol is one of the leading causes of cirrhosis and liver transplant in the United States.** But liver damage from alcohol can often be stopped, and in the early stages reversed. **You are not alone, and help works.**

How alcohol can change the liver over time



Stopping alcohol is the most important step at every stage. Progress varies from person to person.

How much is too much?

Drinking pattern	What it means
Moderate	Up to 1 drink a day for women and 2 for men (U.S. guidelines). Lower is better, and some people should not drink at all, including anyone with liver disease
Binge	4 or more drinks for women, or 5 or more for men, in about 2 hours
Heavy	8 or more drinks a week for women, or 15 or more for men, or any binge drinking on 5 or more days in a month
Liver disease or cirrhosis	Most liver doctors advise no alcohol , because any amount can speed damage

Who is at higher risk?

- Women, who can develop liver damage with less alcohol than men.
- People who are overweight or have diabetes, or who also have hepatitis B or C.
- People with a family history of alcohol use problems or liver disease.
- People who take acetaminophen regularly, or mix alcohol with other medicines.

GETTING HELP AND STAYING SAFE

Warning signs, safe ways to cut back, and where to turn

Do not stop suddenly on your own if you drink heavily every day

- Alcohol withdrawal can cause seizures, confusion, and a dangerous racing heart. **Talk to a doctor first** about safe ways to stop, sometimes with medicine and monitoring.
- Call 911** for seizures, severe confusion, hallucinations, or vomiting blood.

Watch for warning signs

Warning signs	What to do
Yellow skin or eyes, dark urine, swelling in the belly or legs, easy bruising, new confusion	See a doctor soon. These can signal advanced liver disease
Vomiting blood or black stools; severe belly pain with fever	Go to the ER or call 911
Drinking more than planned, cravings, hiding drinking, or drinking despite health problems	Talk with a doctor or call a helpline. These can be signs of an alcohol use disorder

✓ Tips for cutting back

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| ☐ Set a limit and write it down. | ☐ Avoid places and triggers. |
| ☐ Track every drink. | ☐ Tell a friend or family member. |
| ☐ Choose alcohol-free days. | ☐ Plan what to say when offered a drink. |
| ☐ Switch to non-alcoholic drinks. | ☐ Ask a doctor about medicines that reduce cravings. |

Where to get help

Help	What it offers	Contact*
SAMHSA National Helpline	Free, confidential, 24/7 treatment referral	1-800-662-4357
988 Suicide and Crisis Lifeline	Crisis support by call or text	988
NIAAA Alcohol Treatment Navigator	Find evidence-based treatment near you	alcoholtreatment.niaaa.nih.gov
Alcoholics Anonymous; SMART Recovery	Peer support meetings, in person and online	aa.org; smartrecovery.org

*Confirm numbers and websites before relying on them.

My plan

My goal

First step this week

Person I will tell

Doctor and phone
