

What is cirrhosis?

say **si-row-sis**

Your liver is a very important part of your body. It has over 500 different jobs. There are lots of different types of liver disease. Cirrhosis is a late stage in most of them. Cirrhosis is a very serious condition. But many people can live full lives with cirrhosis if it is found early.

What causes cirrhosis?

Cirrhosis happens when scarring builds up in your liver causing damage. The scarring can be caused by many things including:

- alcohol
- fat in your liver
- viral hepatitis
- autoimmune conditions

The scars can:

- cause your liver to shrink and change shape
- replace normal liver cells, making it harder and harder for your liver to do all its normal jobs
- stop blood flowing through your liver normally

Useful words

Fibrosis: Scarring of the liver.

Cirrhosis: Permanent serious liver damage.

Compensated cirrhosis: A stage of cirrhosis where the liver is still able to keep going.

Decompensated cirrhosis: A stage of cirrhosis where the liver cannot work properly causing serious complications.

Recompensation: When decompensated cirrhosis goes back to being compensated cirrhosis.

Red flag symptoms

You might never get any of these. But it is important to know what to do just in case.

If you get any of these symptoms, go to a hospital A&E or call 999 straight away:

- Vomiting blood
- Feeling like you cannot get enough air when you breathe
- Very dark black or tar like poo
- Feeling unusually confused or finding it hard to stay awake
- Jaundice (a yellow colour to your eyes or skin), if this is new to you



Liver UK is the new name for the British Liver Trust and Children's Liver Disease Foundation

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Registered Charity England and Wales 298858, Scotland SC042140

Treatment for cirrhosis

Stopping more damage

It is important to stop more liver damage. This can slow down cirrhosis or stop it getting worse. This usually means stopping or treating whatever is causing the problem.

Regular checks for liver cancer (surveillance)

Cirrhosis increases your risk of a type of cancer called HCC. You should have regular checks to help find this early.

Managing symptoms and complications

Medicines and other treatments can help you to cope with symptoms.

Liver transplant

The only cure for cirrhosis is a liver transplant. But you may not need one and some people will not be able to have one.

Having a liver condition can affect many parts of your life. To find out more about living with a liver condition, scan the QR code or visit liveruk.org/living-with



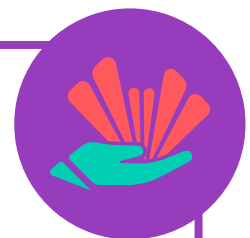
More information about cirrhosis and liver disease

Cirrhosis has lots of causes. It is a serious condition but people can live for years with cirrhosis and may not have any symptoms. Treatment can help to manage cirrhosis, stop it getting worse and keep you as healthy as possible. Your doctors and nurses can help you understand what's happening. To help you remember, you could ask them to write things down or use a smartphone to record information.

How we can help

The Liver UK support team are here for you and for your family and friends. Find out more more at liveruk.org/support

Call our nurse-led helpline to talk to one of our team: **0800 652 7330**



For more information about cirrhosis, and links to support visit liveruk.org/cirrhosis-info or scan the QR code.

