



NUTRITION AND HEPATITIS C

Eat a healthy diet

Nutrition is an important part of living well with hepatitis C. Though you do not need to follow a particular diet, try to consume a healthy diet that is low in fat, cholesterol, and sodium, and high in complex carbohydrates, fruits, vegetables, lean protein, and low fat dairy.

Maintain a healthy weight

In addition to eating a well-balanced diet, individuals with hepatitis C should work to maintain a healthy weight as this might help prevent worsening damage to your liver and the development of "fatty liver". Having a fatty liver in addition to hepatitis C can worsen and speed up the inflammation and scarring of your liver and increase your chances of developing cirrhosis. Work to maintain a healthy weight by eating healthy, drinking plenty of water, and getting at least 30 minutes of exercise a day.

Limit alcohol intake

Alcohol is a toxin to the liver and when consumed in large amounts can lead to worsening liver damage in people with hepatitis C. Alcohol may also make your hepatitis C medications less effective. Although you might not need to avoid alcohol completely, work to limit your alcohol intake to no more than 1 drink per day for women and 2 drinks per day for men. If you believe you have a drinking problem, seek help immediately.

Control symptoms and side effects

You may experience symptoms such as loss of appetite, nausea, and diarrhea as a result of the drugs used to treat hepatitis C. Some people find it helpful to eat 4-6 small, frequent, healthy meals and snacks instead of 3 large meals each day. Eating soft or room temperature food and avoiding spicy and high fat foods can also help lessen the symptoms of nausea. Talk to your doctor or a registered dietitian if your appetite decreases significantly or if you experience any unintended weight loss.

CHECK WITH YOUR DOCTOR BEFORE TAKING ANY DIETARY SUPPLEMENTS

If you have hepatitis C, be sure to check with your health care provider before using any dietary supplements. Not everyone needs to take supplements and some supplements are not recommended for patients with hepatitis C as they can interfere with medical treatments you are receiving.