

Easy B Facts

What Is Cirrhosis?

The amazing thing about the liver is that it can repair itself even when it is infected with hepatitis B (HBV for short). But after a long time (usually 10-40 years) the liver can become so damaged that it can't heal itself completely.

Cirrhosis means that the liver has become so damaged and scarred that it just can't function very well.

Scarring of the liver can be caused by many things, such as alcohol, drugs and diseases like HBV.

There are two types of cirrhosis:

- **Compensated cirrhosis** means that the liver has a lot of scarring but can still perform many important functions.
- **Decompensated cirrhosis** means that the liver is so scarred that it can't perform many of the important things that keep you healthy.

It Is Important to Remember:

- When your liver develops **compensated cirrhosis** you may not even have any symptoms that your liver is damaged. This is why it is so important to get good medical care and monitoring to keep you healthy. This may include taking HBV medications such as pills and interferon (shots) to treat your hepatitis B.
- When you have **decompensated cirrhosis** the liver becomes so damaged you will develop many symptoms and warning signs. When this happens it is very important that you have even more check-ups and monitoring by your doctor. At this point you can still be treated with HBV medicines (pills), but not interferon (shots).
- Make sure that your doctor monitors your liver very closely with blood tests like the AFP and ultrasounds. He or she can tell you how frequently these tests and others are needed.



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Alan Franciscus