



## Alcohol and HCV

### Forward

One of the first recommendations given to patients with hepatitis C virus (HCV) infection is to abstain from alcohol use. This recommendation is especially important for HCV patients undergoing antiviral therapy. Both the American Association for the Study of Liver Diseases (AASLD) and the National Institutes of Health (NIH) Consensus statement strongly encourage that HCV patients avoid all alcohol use.

Unfortunately some individuals find it difficult to give up drinking. According to a study conducted by the National Institute of Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism (NIAAA), more than 15 million Americans have Alcohol Use Disorder (<https://www.niaaa.nih.gov/alcohol-health/overview-alcohol-consumption/alcohol-use-disorders>). Alcohol abuse doesn't just affect livers. It can threaten the immune system, the brain, financial security, relationships, and families. In short, it can influence every aspect of life.

How do you know if you have a drinking problem? There are questionnaires that can help you identify if you have an alcohol problem (see Resources). The NIAAA suggests using the **CAGE** questionnaire:

“Answering the following four questions can help you find out if you or a loved one has a drinking problem:

1. Have you ever felt you should **C**ut down on your drinking?
2. Have people **A**nnoyed you by criticizing your drinking?
3. Have you ever felt bad or **G**uilty about your drinking?
4. Have you ever taken a morning **E**ye-opener (drink first thing in the morning)?

One “yes” answer suggests a possible alcohol problem. More than one “yes” answer means it is highly likely that a problem exists. If you think that you

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### HCV FACT SHEET

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The information in this fact sheet is designed to help you understand and manage HCV and is not intended as medical advice. All persons with HCV should consult a medical practitioner for diagnosis and treatment of HCV.

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or someone you know might have an alcohol problem, it is important to see a doctor or other health care provider right away. They can help you determine if a drinking problem exists and plan the best course of action. Alcoholics Anonymous has it's own self-test "Is AA for You?" [www.aa.org/lang/en/subpage.cfm?page=71](http://www.aa.org/lang/en/subpage.cfm?page=71)

If you are unable to quit drinking, you may need help. Alcoholism is a disease, not a character flaw. There are many resources to assist those with alcohol problems, including professional, non-professional, self-help, spiritual, and secular-based approaches. If one method does not work, try another until you find one that works for you.

Standard drink equivalents		
	<b>Beer or cooler</b> 12 oz., ~5% alcohol	12 oz. = 1 16 oz. = 1.3 22 oz. = 2 40 oz. = 3.3
	<b>Malt liquor</b> 8-9 oz., ~7% alcohol	12 oz. = 1.5 16 oz. = 2 22 oz. = 2.5 40 oz. = 4.5
	<b>Table wine</b> 5 oz., ~12% alcohol	a 750 mL (25 oz.) bottle = 5
	<b>80-proof spirits</b> (hard liquor), 1.5 oz., ~40% alcohol	a mixed drink = 1 or more* a pint (16 oz.) = 11 a fifth (25 oz.) = 17 1.75 L (59 oz.) = 39
<small>* Depending on factors such as the type of spirits and the recipe, one mixed drink can contain from one to three or more standard drinks. Source: NIAAA</small>		

**Related publications:**

- **Easy C - A Guide to Understanding Hepatitis**  
[http://hcvadvocate.org/hepatitis/easyfacts/Easy\\_C\\_Guide.pdf](http://hcvadvocate.org/hepatitis/easyfacts/Easy_C_Guide.pdf)
- **First Steps with HCV for the Newly Diagnosed**  
[http://hcvadvocate.org/hepatitis/First%20Steps/First\\_Steps\\_with\\_Hepatitis\\_C\\_for\\_the\\_Newly\\_Diagnosed.pdf](http://hcvadvocate.org/hepatitis/First%20Steps/First_Steps_with_Hepatitis_C_for_the_Newly_Diagnosed.pdf)
- **A Guide to Understanding Hepatitis C:**  
[www.hcvadvocate.org/hepatitis/factsheets\\_pdf/HCV\\_Guide.pdf](http://www.hcvadvocate.org/hepatitis/factsheets_pdf/HCV_Guide.pdf)

**For more information**

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Americans with Disabilities Act</b><br/><a href="http://www.ada.gov">www.ada.gov</a></li> <li>• <b>Centers for Disease Control and Prevention</b><br/><a href="http://www.cdc.gov">www.cdc.gov</a></li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Mayo Clinic</b><br/><a href="http://www.mayoclinic.org">www.mayoclinic.org</a></li> <li>• <b>MedlinePlus</b><br/><a href="http://www.nlm.nih.gov/medlineplus">www.nlm.nih.gov/medlineplus</a></li> </ul> |
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*This fact sheet was originally written by Lucinda Porter, RN.  
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