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Cirrhosis

Also called: Hepatic fibrosis

Cirrhosis is scarring of the liver. Scar tissue forms because of injury or long-term disease. Scar tissue cannot do what healthy liver tissue does - make protein, help fight infections, clean the blood, help digest food and store energy. Cirrhosis can lead to :

- Easy bruising or bleeding, or nosebleeds
- Swelling of the abdomen or legs
- Extra sensitivity to medicines
- High blood pressure in the vein entering the liver
- Enlarged veins called varices in the esophagus and stomach. Varices can bleed suddenly.
- Kidney failure
- Jaundice
- Severe itching
- Gallstones


A small number of people with cirrhosis get liver cancer [<https://medlineplus.gov/livercancer.html>] .

Your doctor will diagnose cirrhosis with blood tests, imaging tests, or a biopsy.



Cirrhosis has many causes. In the United States, the most common causes are chronic alcoholism [<https://medlineplus.gov/alcoholusedisorderaud.html>] and hepatitis [<https://medlineplus.gov/hepatitis.html>] . Nothing will make the scar tissue disappear, but treating the cause can keep it from getting worse. If too much scar tissue forms, you may need to consider a liver transplant [<https://medlineplus.gov/livertransplantation.html>] .







NIH: National Institute of Diabetes and Digestive and Kidney Diseases

Start Here



- Cirrhosis [<https://www.niddk.nih.gov/health-information/liver-disease/cirrhosis>]
 (National Institute of Diabetes and Digestive and Kidney Diseases)
Also in Spanish [<https://www.niddk.nih.gov/health-information/informacion-de-la-salud/enfermedades-higado/cirrosi>]
- Cirrhosis for Patients [<https://www.hepatitis.va.gov/cirrhosis/patient/index.asp>] (Department of Veterans Affairs)

Diagnosis and Tests

- Abdominal and Pelvic CT (Computed Tomography) [<https://www.radiologyinfo.org/en/info/abdominct>]
 (American College of Radiology; Radiological Society of North America)
Also in Spanish [<https://www.radiologyinfo.org/es/info/abdominct>]
- Abdominal Ultrasound [<https://www.radiologyinfo.org/en/info/abdominus>]
 (American College of Radiology; Radiological Society of North America)
Also in Spanish [<https://www.radiologyinfo.org/es/info/abdominus>]

- Body MRI [<https://www.radiologyinfo.org/en/info/bodymr>]  (American College of Radiology; Radiological Society of North America)
Also in Spanish [<https://www.radiologyinfo.org/es/info/bodymr>]
- Elastography [<https://medlineplus.gov/lab-tests/elastography/>]  (National Library of Medicine)
Also in Spanish [<https://medlineplus.gov/spanish/pruebas-de-laboratorio/elastografia/>]
- Liver Biopsy [<https://www.niddk.nih.gov/health-information/diagnostic-tests/liver-biopsy>]  (National Institute of Diabetes and Digestive and Kidney Diseases)
Also in Spanish [<https://www.niddk.nih.gov/health-information/informacion-de-la-salud/pruebas-diagnosticas/biopsia-higado>]
- Liver Function Tests [<https://medlineplus.gov/lab-tests/liver-function-tests/>]  (National Library of Medicine)
Also in Spanish [<https://medlineplus.gov/spanish/pruebas-de-laboratorio/pruebas-funcionales-hepaticas/>]
- MRCP (MR Cholangiopancreatography) [<https://www.radiologyinfo.org/en/info/mrcp>]  (American College of Radiology; Radiological Society of North America)
Also in Spanish [<https://www.radiologyinfo.org/es/info/mrcp>]
- Smooth Muscle Antibody (SMA) Test [<https://medlineplus.gov/lab-tests/smooth-muscle-antibody-sma-test/>]  (National Library of Medicine)
Also in Spanish [<https://medlineplus.gov/spanish/pruebas-de-laboratorio/prueba-de-anticuerpos-contra-el-musculo-liso/>]

Treatments and Therapies

- Milk Thistle [<https://www.nccih.nih.gov/health/milk-thistle>]  (National Center for Complementary and Integrative Health)
- Transjugular Intrahepatic Portosystemic Shunt (TIPS) [<https://www.radiologyinfo.org/en/info/tips>]  (American College of Radiology; Radiological Society of North America)
Also in Spanish [<https://www.radiologyinfo.org/es/info/tips>]

Living With

- Eating Tips for People with Cirrhosis [<https://www.hepatitis.va.gov/cirrhosis/patient/diet.asp>] (Department of Veterans Affairs)



Related Issues

- Alcohol and Cirrhosis [<https://www.hepatitis.va.gov/alcohol/patient/cirrhosis.asp>] (Department of Veterans Affairs)
- Ascites: A Common Problem in People with Cirrhosis [<https://gi.org/topics/ascites/>] (American College of Gastroenterology)
- Cirrhosis and Portal Hypertension [<https://familydoctor.org/condition/cirrhosis-and-portal-hypertension/?adfree=true>] (American Academy of Family Physicians)
Also in Spanish [<https://es.familydoctor.org/condicion/cirrosis-e-hipertension-portal-es/?adfree=true>]
- Esophageal Varices [<https://www.mayoclinic.org/diseases-conditions/esophageal-varices/symptoms-causes/syc-20351538?p=1>] (Mayo Foundation for Medical Education and Research)
Also in Spanish [<https://www.mayoclinic.org/es/diseases-conditions/esophageal-varices/symptoms-causes/syc-20351538?p=1>]
- Nonalcoholic Fatty Liver Disease (NAFLD) and NASH [<https://www.niddk.nih.gov/health-information/liver-disease/naflid-nash>]  (National Institute of Diabetes and Digestive and Kidney Diseases)
Also in Spanish [<https://www.niddk.nih.gov/health-information/informacion-de-la-salud/enfermedades-higado/esteatohepatitis-no-alcoholica>]
- Primary Biliary Cholangitis [<https://www.mayoclinic.org/diseases-conditions/primary-biliary-cholangitis/symptoms-causes/syc-20376874?p=1>] (Mayo Foundation for Medical Education and Research)
Also in Spanish [<https://www.mayoclinic.org/es/diseases-conditions/primary-biliary-cholangitis/symptoms-causes/syc-20376874?p=1>]
- Primary Biliary Cholangitis (Primary Biliary Cirrhosis) [<https://www.niddk.nih.gov/health-information/liver-disease/primary-biliary-cholangitis>]  (National Institute of Diabetes and Digestive and Kidney Diseases)
Also in Spanish [<https://www.niddk.nih.gov/health-information/informacion-de-la-salud/enfermedades-higado/colangitis-biliar-primaria>]

Specifics

- What Is Decompensated Cirrhosis? [<https://www.hepatitis.va.gov/cirrhosis/patient/decompensated.asp>] (Department of Veterans Affairs)


Genetics

- Alpha-1 antitrypsin deficiency: MedlinePlus Genetics [<https://medlineplus.gov/genetics/condition/alpha-1-antitrypsin-deficiency>]  (National Library of Medicine)
- Cryptogenic cirrhosis: MedlinePlus Genetics [<https://medlineplus.gov/genetics/condition/cryptogenic-cirrhosis>]  (National Library of Medicine)

Statistics and Research

- FastStats: Chronic Liver Disease and Cirrhosis [<https://www.cdc.gov/nchs/fastats/liver-disease.htm>] (National Center for Health Statistics)

Clinical Trials


- ClinicalTrials.gov: Liver Cirrhosis [<https://clinicaltrials.gov/search?cond=%22Liver+Cirrhosis%22&aggFilters=status:not%20rec>]  (National Institutes of Health)

Journal Articles

References and abstracts from MEDLINE/PubMed (National Library of Medicine)

- Article: Dose-escalation studies of mesenchymal stromal cell therapy for decompensated liver cirrhosis:... [<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/40721581>]
- Article: The effectiveness of combining ursodeoxycholic acid with vitamin D in treating... [<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/40676542>]
- Article: Multiparametric ultrasound for non-invasive assessment of liver steatosis, fibrosis, and inflammation... [<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/40656616>]
- Cirrhosis -- see more articles [<https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/?term=%22Liver+Cirrhosis%22%5Bmajr%3Anoexp%5D+AND+humans%5Bmh%5D+AND+english%5Bla%5D+AND+%22last+1+Year%22+%5Bedat%5D+AND+%28patient+education+handout%5Bpt%5D+OR+guideline%5Bpt%5D+OR+clinical+trial%5Bpt%5D%29++NOT+%28letter%5Bpt%5D+OR+case+reports%5Bpt%5D+OR+editorial%5Bpt%5D+OR+comment%5Bpt%5D%29+AND+free+full+text%5Bsb%5D+>]

Find an Expert

- American Liver Foundation [<https://liverfoundation.org/>]
- National Institute of Diabetes and Digestive and Kidney Diseases [<https://www.niddk.nih.gov>] 

Patient Handouts

- Abdominal tap [<https://medlineplus.gov/ency/article/003896.htm>] (Medical Encyclopedia)
Also in Spanish [<https://medlineplus.gov/spanish/ency/article/003896.htm>]
- Ascites [<https://medlineplus.gov/ency/article/000286.htm>] (Medical Encyclopedia)
Also in Spanish [<https://medlineplus.gov/spanish/ency/article/000286.htm>]
- Cirrhosis [<https://medlineplus.gov/ency/article/000255.htm>] (Medical Encyclopedia)
Also in Spanish [<https://medlineplus.gov/spanish/ency/article/000255.htm>]
- Cirrhosis - discharge [<https://medlineplus.gov/ency/patientinstructions/000290.htm>] (Medical Encyclopedia)
Also in Spanish [<https://medlineplus.gov/spanish/ency/patientinstructions/000290.htm>]
- Loss of brain function - liver disease [<https://medlineplus.gov/ency/article/000302.htm>] (Medical Encyclopedia)
Also in Spanish [<https://medlineplus.gov/spanish/ency/article/000302.htm>]
- Transjugular intrahepatic portosystemic shunt (TIPS) [<https://medlineplus.gov/ency/article/007210.htm>] (Medical Encyclopedia)
Also in Spanish [<https://medlineplus.gov/spanish/ency/article/007210.htm>]



MEDICAL ENCYCLOPEDIA

Abdominal tap [<https://medlineplus.gov/ency/article/003896.htm>]

ACE blood test [<https://medlineplus.gov/ency/article/003567.htm>]

Alpha fetoprotein [<https://medlineplus.gov/ency/article/003573.htm>]

Alpha-1 antitrypsin blood test [<https://medlineplus.gov/ency/article/003715.htm>]

Anti-smooth muscle antibody [<https://medlineplus.gov/ency/article/003531.htm>]

Antimitochondrial antibody [<https://medlineplus.gov/ency/article/003529.htm>]

Ascites [<https://medlineplus.gov/ency/article/000286.htm>]

Bleeding esophageal varices [<https://medlineplus.gov/ency/article/000268.htm>]

Cirrhosis [<https://medlineplus.gov/ency/article/000255.htm>]

Cirrhosis - discharge [<https://medlineplus.gov/ency/patientinstructions/000290.htm>]

Gamma-glutamyl transpeptidase (GGT) blood test [<https://medlineplus.gov/ency/article/003458.htm>]

Hepatorenal syndrome [<https://medlineplus.gov/ency/article/000489.htm>]

Leucine aminopeptidase - urine [<https://medlineplus.gov/ency/article/003617.htm>]

Leucine aminopeptidase blood test [<https://medlineplus.gov/ency/article/003559.htm>]

Liver biopsy [<https://medlineplus.gov/ency/article/003895.htm>]

Loss of brain function - liver disease [<https://medlineplus.gov/ency/article/000302.htm>]

Mesenteric angiography [<https://medlineplus.gov/ency/article/003819.htm>]

Pleural fluid analysis [<https://medlineplus.gov/ency/article/003624.htm>]

Portacaval shunting [<https://medlineplus.gov/ency/article/007336.htm>]

Primary biliary cirrhosis [<https://medlineplus.gov/ency/article/000282.htm>]

Protein electrophoresis - serum [<https://medlineplus.gov/ency/article/003540.htm>]

Total iron binding capacity [<https://medlineplus.gov/ency/article/003489.htm>]

Transjugular intrahepatic portosystemic shunt (TIPS) [<https://medlineplus.gov/ency/article/007210.htm>]

Related Health Topics

Gallbladder Diseases [<https://medlineplus.gov/gallbladderdiseases.html>]

Liver Cancer [<https://medlineplus.gov/livercancer.html>]

Liver Diseases [<https://medlineplus.gov/liverdiseases.html>]

Liver Transplantation [<https://medlineplus.gov/livertransplantation.html>]

National Institutes of Health

The primary NIH organization for research on *Cirrhosis* is the National Institute of Diabetes and Digestive and Kidney Diseases [<https://www.niddk.nih.gov>]

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