

Mayo Clinic Minute: How alcohol affects the liver

Excessive alcohol use can harm the body in many ways, including an increase in the risk of various cancers. It damages liver cells, leading to inflammation, scarring and serious conditions such as cirrhosis.

Dr. Andrew Keaveny, a Mayo Clinic transplant hepatologist, says heavy drinking also can lead to alcoholic hepatitis, which is becoming more common in [younger people](#).

Video.	Audio
	"Alcohol can cause liver damage. And in some individuals who drink excessively, it can result in significant complications.
	Sustained alcohol use can result in alcohol-related liver disease.
Andrew Keaveny, M.D. Transplant Hepatology Mayo Clinic	"There is a condition called acute alcoholic hepatitis, where the alcohol triggers an acute inflammatory process in the liver, and patients can become really quite sick, quite quickly."
	And it's rising among young people, says Mayo Clinic's Dr. Andrew Keaveny.
	"Some of the more tragic cases of liver disease related to alcohol received now are due to young individuals who consume excessively, or binge alcohol."
	Alcoholic hepatitis can develop quickly. Symptoms can include jaundice, confusion, nausea and vomiting.
	"They can present with multiple complications of their liver disease, which requires really a multidisciplinary approach to address and manage their issues."
	Treating alcoholic hepatitis requires an assessment of liver damage and complications and addressing the patient's alcohol use disorder. Dr. Keaveny says corticosteroids may be used, but they have limited effectiveness and risks. The next step may be transplant.
	"We consider patients for liver transplantation who have acute alcoholic hepatitis. This requires a very careful assessment of multiple factors, their medical, social and psychological factors, to determine whether they may be eligible for liver transplantation."
	For the Mayo Clinic News Network, I'm Joel Streed.