

Liver

Excessive alcohol consumption can damage the liver

The liver breaks down alcohol so that it can be eliminated from the body.

Prolonged, heavy alcohol consumption can damage the liver and this will prevent it from functioning properly.

Liver diseases associated with alcohol include fatty liver (also known as steatosis), alcohol hepatitis and liver cirrhosis.

While some of the symptoms of these diseases are minimal, other consequences can be very serious, including severe jaundice, blood clotting problems and, possibly, death. Prolonged, heavy alcohol consumption is also one of the factors associated with hepatocellular carcinoma, a primary cancer of the liver.

Liver disease that's associated with alcohol consumption is normally seen in alcoholics or those who've had a prolonged history of alcohol abuse. The risk of developing liver disease increases as the duration of alcohol use and the amount of alcohol consumed increases.

What is cirrhosis?

Cirrhosis is perhaps the most well-known of the liver diseases associated with alcohol abuse.

It's a condition where scar tissue replaces normal liver tissue due to chronic injury – the word 'cirrhosis' means scarring. As the scarring progresses, it alters the liver's normal structure and interferes with the way it functions.

Cirrhosis of the liver can have very serious health consequences, including death.

The consequences of some liver diseases can be very serious



take action

If you have an existing liver disease, such as hepatitis, or you're at risk of liver disease for other reasons, such as obesity or you are taking certain medications, you should talk to your doctor to see if it's safe for you to drink alcohol at all.

talkingalcohol.com

is a site dedicated to helping people make informed choices about alcohol

other websites

These sites contain further information that you may find useful. However, SABMiller is not responsible for the content of these sites.

- American Liver Foundation, Alcohol-Related Liver Disease www.liverfoundation.org/abouttheliver/info/alcohol/
- British Liver Trust, What About Alcohol? www.britishlivertrust.org.uk/home/the-liver/diet--liver-disease/what-about-alcohol.aspx
- National Digestive Diseases Information Clearinghouse, Cirrhosis www.digestive.niddk.nih.gov/ddiseases/pubs/cirrhosis/
- NIAAA (US), Alcoholic Liver Disease www.pubs.niaaa.nih.gov/publications/aa64/aa64.htm
- Patient UK, Alcohol and Liver Disease www.patient.co.uk/showdoc/23068925

