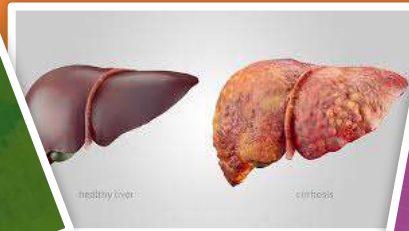


COVID-19 Health Advisory

For people with liver disease and liver transplant patients



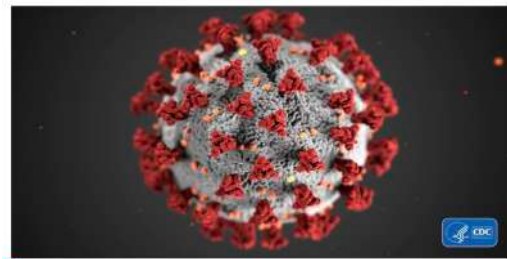
WHAT IS COVID-19?

COVID-19 is a respiratory disease caused by a new strain of coronavirus. This new virus and disease were unknown before the outbreak began in Wuhan, China, in December 2019.

How does one get COVID-19?

The virus can be spread from person-to-person through:

- Close contact with someone who has the virus.
- Contact with droplets from an infected person's cough or sneeze.
- Touching objects or surfaces that have cough or sneeze droplets from an infected person, then touching your face.



What are the symptoms of COVID-19?

The virus may affect individuals differently.

People with COVID-19 most commonly experience:

- Fever
- Flu-like symptoms, including coughing, sore throat and fatigue
- Shortness of breath

*Many people who come in contact with the virus will experience a mild illness, but some can go on to develop serious effects such as **pneumonia** and **severe respiratory disease** leading to failure.*





What are the risks of coronavirus COVID-19 for people living with hepatitis B or hepatitis C?

Some people living with hepatitis B and hepatitis C could be at **greater risk of serious health complications** if they become infected with COVID-19.

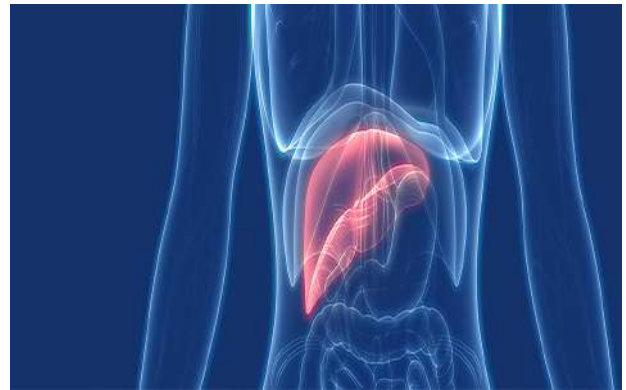
In particular, if you have had hepatitis B or hepatitis C for some time, and have developed advanced liver diseases (including cirrhosis) this makes severe COVID-19 illness more likely.



Who are at risk for having severe disease?

The following groups could be at **higher risk of serious illness** from COVID-19:

- Elderly people – the risk becomes significantly greater in those aged over 60 years
- People with pre-existing conditions such as diabetes, hypertension, heart or chronic lung disease
- People with weakened immune systems (e.g. people on immune-suppressing medications, people receiving cancer treatments)
- People with chronic medical conditions such as cirrhosis and hepatitis



What if I am immunosuppressed or immunocompromised?

The best way to prevent illness is to avoid being exposed to the virus.

Be vigilant and use basic measures to protect yourself against COVID-19 and **consult your healthcare provider if in doubt about your risk.**

- People with significant liver disease are recommended to **receive vaccinations against influenza and pneumococcal disease.**
- It is a good reminder to consider asking your doctor for a **liver health check** if you have not had one in the last six months.
- If you are currently taking treatment



When to seek medical attention?

Seek medical advice from your healthcare provider in the event of:

- Onset of symptoms
- Close contact with someone who tested COVID-19 positive

References:

1. AUS Department of Health. (2020, March 4). Coronavirus (COVID-19). Retrieved from Australian Government Department of Health: www.health.gov.au/health-topics/novel-coronavirus-2019-ncov [Accessed 5 March 2020]
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3. Hepatitis Australia Coronavirus COVID-19 Factsheet for people with hepatitis B and hepatitis C
4. Coronavirus (COVID-19) – health advice for people with liver disease and liver transplant patients. British Liver Trust. www.britishlivertrust.org.uk

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