Cirrhosis & Nutrition

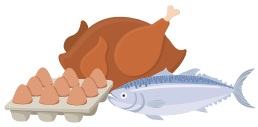
Understanding cirrhosis

The liver helps clean the waste from your body and turns the food you eat into energy. Cirrhosis is when your liver is damaged and does not work well because of scarring. You may need more protein and calories than normal with cirrhosis.

Taking care of your liver

Follow these recommendations to help your liver get better.

Why protein matters



People with cirrhosis need enough protein and calories to stay strong and prevent muscle loss.

Eat protein daily

Aim for meals or snacks with protein four (4) to six (6) times per day.

Choose high-quality protein:

- Lean meats such as chicken and turkey.
- Fish.
- Eggs.
- Dairy products such as milk, yogurt, and cheese.
- Seeds and nuts, if allowed by your doctor.

Before bedtime

A small snack of protein and carbohydrates helps prevent muscle breakdown overnight.

Eat enough protein to help you:

- Maintain muscle strength.
- Support liver function.
- Improve energy and recovery.

Limit salt



Eat less than 2,000 mg of sodium each day. If your arms, legs, or belly begin to swell, it is important to have less salt in your diet.

Common sources of salt:

- Processed meats.
- Chips.
- Pretzels.
- Pork rinds.
- Table salt.
- Fast foods.
- Frozen meals.
- Marinades.
- Soy sauce.
- Teriyaki sauce.
- Canned beans.
- Canned vegetables.

Use salt-free seasonings:

- Dried herbs and spices.
- Mrs. Dash.
- Seasoning mixes with no salt.



Fiber in your diet

Not eating enough fruits and vegetables raises your risk of cirrhosis. Eating more fiber lowers your cholesterol. Fiber gives you important nutrients to heal your liver. Eat five (5) to seven (7) servings of fruits and vegetables per day.

Good sources of fiber:

- Fruits.
- Vegetables.
- Whole grains.
- Beans.
- Lentils.
- Nuts.
- Seeds.

Drink fluids



Swelling in your arms, legs, and belly is common during cirrhosis. Your doctor will tell you if drinking less fluid helps with your swelling.

Benefits of exercise



Exercise helps you feel better and stay strong. It keeps your muscles healthy and gives you more energy. It also helps you feel hungry, which is important for your dietary goals.