

# What is Cirrhosis?

The amazing thing about the liver is that it can repair itself even when it is infected by hepatitis C (HCV or Hep C for short). But after a long time (usually 10-40 years) the liver can become so damaged that it can't heal itself completely.

Cirrhosis means that the liver has become so damaged and scarred that it just can't function very well.

Scarring of the liver can be caused by many things, such as alcohol, drugs and diseases like hepatitis C.

## ***There are two types of cirrhosis:***

- **Compensated cirrhosis** means that the liver has a lot of scarring but can still perform many important functions.
- **Decompensated cirrhosis** means that the liver is so scarred that it can't perform many of the important things that keep you healthy.

## *Remember...*

- When your liver develops **compensated cirrhosis** you may not even have any symptoms that your liver is damaged. This is why it is so important to get good medical care to keep you healthy. This may include taking HCV medications to treat your hepatitis C.
- When you have **decompensated cirrhosis** the liver becomes so damaged you will develop many symptoms and warning signs. When this happens it is very important that you receive regular check-ups with your doctor to keep an eye on you more closely and to treat you for some of the symptoms. At this point, doctors will not usually give you the medicines to treat hepatitis C.

[www.hcvadvocate.org](http://www.hcvadvocate.org)

