

Alcohol Monitoring in Alcohol-Related Liver Disease

Our goal in the UW Health Liver Transplant program is to help you achieve your best post-transplant outcome.

Alcohol Use Disorder

Your liver transplant will not treat the cause of your liver disease. Your liver disease was caused by alcohol use disorder. This means you are not able to stop or control alcohol use despite its effects on your social life, work life, and/or health.

Relapse

Many patients think they will never drink again after it made them so sick. Yet, up to half of liver transplant patients will relapse and use some alcohol after transplant. About 1 in 5 liver transplant patients use alcohol in a harmful way. We know that staying sober is hard. It can take up to five years without alcohol to feel secure in your sobriety.

Survival After Transplant

Alcohol will cause more severe damage to your new liver much more quickly. It will also decrease your chance of survival. This may be due to:

- Alcohol-related liver disease.
- Forgetting to take medicines while drinking, leading to rejection.
- Cancers that are linked to alcohol use.

Alcohol Testing

Treating alcohol use disorder is vital for the success of the liver transplant. You will be tested for alcohol use at multiple points during the liver transplant process. You will be tested:

- During the liver transplant evaluation.
- While on the transplant waitlist.
- After the liver transplant.

We test for alcohol use using blood or urine tests. The purpose of testing is to find those patients who struggle with alcohol so that we can help them. We want to be open and honest with you about alcohol and relapse. We are here to help you stay sober and achieve your transplant goals.

Your health care team may have given you this information as part of your care. If so, please use it and call if you have any questions. If this information was not given to you as part of your care, please check with your doctor. This is not medical advice. This is not to be used for diagnosis or treatment of any medical condition. Because each person's health needs are different, you should talk with your doctor or others on your health care team when using this information. If you have an emergency, please call 911. Copyright © 5/2021 University of Wisconsin Hospitals and Clinics Authority. All rights reserved. Produced by the Department of Nursing HF#8195.