Love Your Liver This Holiday Season

Beware the damage that too much eating and drinking can do to your body.

December 21, 2018 By Casey Halter

Can’t wait to eat, drink and be merry this holiday season? If you’re living with or at risk for liver disease, be careful—doctors say this time of year can do long-term damage to your health, Delish reports in a new article.

The article outlines the effects of too much food and alcohol on the liver and is an annual warning people living with hepatitis may wish to heed. Because the liver is the body’s front-line filter, overindulgence can affect the body’s ability to flush out bad stuff, including alcohol, fatty acids, cholesterol and other harmful substances.

Drinking too much can cause inflammation and eventually kill off liver cells, leaving scar tissue in their place. Too much scar tissue can lead to or worsen cirrhosis. And doctors say just three gatherings a week during which someone consumes more than five servings of alcohol in two hours (common enough during the holidays) can kick-start inflammation.

Eating too much, especially when feasting involves foods with lots of saturated fats, refined carb or processed red meat can lead to non-alcoholic fatty liver disease (NAFLD), which occurs when fat starts filling the liver. Like alcohol, this fat can lead to inflammation and eventual scarring. Doctors say NAFLD can develop in as little as six weeks if someone really overdoes it.

Fortunately, with a little self-control (including, possibly, a dry January) the liver can regenerate. Losing weight after the holidays can also help reduce fat in the liver by up to 30 percent.

To learn more about diet and liver disease, click here.

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