

# Drinking coffee slows progression of liver disease in chronic hepatitis C sufferers

October 20 2009

---

Patients with chronic hepatitis C and advanced liver disease who drink three or more cups of coffee per day have a 53% lower risk of liver disease progression than non-coffee drinkers according to a new study led by Neal Freedman, Ph.D., MPH, from the National Cancer Institute (NCI).

The study found that patients with hepatitis C-related bridging fibrosis or cirrhosis who did not respond to standard disease treatment benefited from increased coffee intake. An effect on liver disease was not observed in patients who drank black or green tea. Findings of the study appear in the November issue of *Hepatology*, a journal published by Wiley-Blackwell on behalf of the American Association for the Study of Liver Diseases.

Hepatitis C virus (HCV) infects approximately 2.2% of the world's population with more than 3 million Americans infected. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) cites HCV as the leading cause of [liver transplantation](#) in the U.S. and accounts for 8,000 to 10,000 deaths in the country annually. Globally, the World Health Organization (WHO) estimates 3 to 4 million persons contract HCV each year with 70% becoming chronic cases that can lead to cirrhosis of the liver and liver cancer.

This study included 766 participants enrolled in the Hepatitis C Antiviral Long-Term Treatment against Cirrhosis (HALT-C) trial who had hepatitis C-related bridging fibrosis or cirrhosis and failed to respond to

standard treatment of the anti-viral drugs peginterferon and ribavirin. At the onset of the study, HALT-C patients were asked to report their typical frequency of coffee intake and portion size over the past year, using 9 frequency categories ranging from 'never' to 'every day' and 4 categories of portion size (1 cup, 2 cups, 3-4 cups, and 5+ cups). A similar question was asked for black and green tea intake. "This study is the first to address the association between liver disease progression related to hepatitis C and coffee intake," stated Dr. Freedman.

Participants were seen every 3 months during the 3.8-year study period to assess clinical outcomes which included: ascites (abnormal accumulation of fluid in the abdomen), prognosis of chronic liver disease, death related to liver disease, hepatic encephalopathy (brain and nervous system damage), hepatocellular carcinoma (liver cancer), spontaneous bacterial peritonitis, variceal hemorrhage, or increase in fibrosis. Liver biopsies were also taken at 1.5 and 3.5 five years to determine the progression of liver disease.

Results showed that participants who drank 3 or more cups of coffee per day had a relative risk of .47 for reaching one of the clinical outcomes. Researchers did not observe any association between tea intake and liver disease progression, though tea consumption was low in the study. "Given the large number of people affected by HCV it is important to identify modifiable risk factors associated with the progression of liver disease," said Dr. Freedman. "Although we cannot rule out a possible role for other factors that go along with drinking coffee, results from our study suggest that patients with high coffee intake had a lower risk of disease progression." Results from this study should not be generalized to healthier populations cautioned the authors.

More information: "Coffee Intake Is Associated with Lower Rates of [Liver Disease](#) Progression in Chronic [Hepatitis C](#)," Neal D. Freedman, James E. Everhart, Karen L. Lindsay , Marc G. Ghany, Teresa M. Curto,

Mitchell L. Shiffman, William M. Lee, Anna S. Lok, Adrian M. Di Bisceglie, Herbert L. Bonkovsky, John C. Hoefs, Jules L. Dienstag, Chihiro Morishima, Christian C. Abnet, Rashmi Sinha<sup>1</sup>, and the HALT-C Trial Group. *Hepatology*; Published Online: July 13, 2009 ([DOI: 10.1002/hep.23162](https://doi.org/10.1002/hep.23162)); Print Issue Date: November 2009.  
[www3.interscience.wiley.com/jo ... /122511224/abstract](http://www3.interscience.wiley.com/jo.../122511224/abstract)

Source: Wiley ([news](#) : [web](#))

Citation: Drinking coffee slows progression of liver disease in chronic hepatitis C sufferers (2009, October 20) retrieved 23 April 2024 from  
<https://medicalxpress.com/news/2009-10-coffee-liver-disease-chronic-hepatitis.html>

This document is subject to copyright. Apart from any fair dealing for the purpose of private study or research, no part may be reproduced without the written permission. The content is provided for information purposes only.