

Liver Awareness Month

The liver is one of the hardest working organs in the body.

Too much 'fun' at parties, fried foods, animal fats, sugar, caffeine, alcohol and a list of other over indulgences can wreak havoc on your internal organs, most significantly your liver.

The liver removes toxins from the blood, breaks down hormones, synthesizes necessary bio-chemicals from nutrients

and produces bile to digest fats. A healthy liver is essential to a healthy body.



Most toxins, or poisons, enter the bloodstream by swallowing or inhaling something we probably should have avoided in the first place. Some are released by dying cells or invading bacteria while others simply enter through the pores in our skin. Toxins can also enter through prescription medications, food additives, air pollution, and other sources that may be impossible to avoid completely. The liver, or what some refer to as 'the body's waste-purification plant,' breaks down these toxins and removes them from the blood before they can become harmful.

The kidney also helps to break down Poisons and toxins and eliminates them through urine and feces, or when we exhale. To keep our bodies in top working order it is recommended that we exercise regularly, drink six to eight, eight ounce glasses of water each day, avoid tobacco smoke and other fumes, and eat lots of fresh fruits, vegetables, and whole grains.

Avoiding obvious hazards such as raw shellfish, recreational drugs and unsafe sex, (all of which can cause the liver-damaging disease hepatitis) can protect us to some extent, but nothing beats good common sense. Even if we're trying to be good to our liver, cell damage can still occur that interferes with the liver's ability to breakdown toxins.

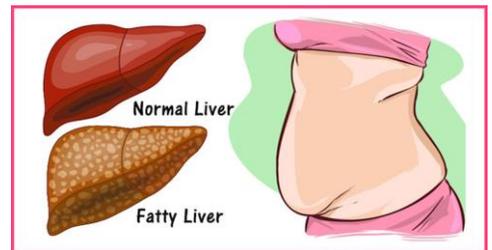
Given everything we put our liver through "liver detoxification" may be a welcome option. With the liver working double-time to protect us from bad diet, bad judgment, and poor exercise habits, we may benefit from a little extra help.

Supplements and Antioxidant vitamins such as C, E, and beta-carotene; B-vitamins that aid alcohol metabolism; herbs reported to "cleanse" the liver such as milk thistle, minerals like zinc and selenium; dandelion root, and schizandra, might help protect liver cells while ridding your body of poisons.

Here are a few ways of keeping your liver healthy:

1. Avoid excessive amounts of alcohol. Drinking a lot of alcohol can be damaging to liver cells, which leads to the swelling or scarring that becomes cirrhosis and can be deadly. The U.S. government guidelines suggest that men should not have more than two drinks per day and women should limit it to only one.
2. Certain medicines such as cholesterol drugs, acetaminophen (Tylenol), cold medicines and prescription pain medications can be harmful to your liver if you take too much. Always follow dosing recommendations and check with your physician before starting any regimen.

3. A healthy diet and regular exercise is always good advice for caring for your liver and every other organ in your body. Proper diet and exercise will also help you control your weight and aide in the prevention of nonalcoholic fatty liver disease (NAFLD), a condition that leads to cirrhosis.



4. Research shows that drinking coffee may also help lower your risk of getting liver disease. However, more research is needed to know why this is before justifying that extra cup of joe in the morning.

At PBW we offer a variety of products to help you care for your liver and suggest that you come in and read the labels, talk with our staff, become informed and then make a decision that's right for you.

