



Lung and Liver Disease: Know Your Risks

Unless you live in a bubble, nowhere is 100% risk-free. Long-term, repeated exposures to risk factors have dangers. So, reducing them whenever you can may help you breathe better and live longer. Let's take a look at some common risk factors for lung and liver disease.

Risk factors related to Alpha-1 liver disease

Risk factors for [Alpha-1 liver disease](#) aren't as well-known as those for [lung disease](#).

Your liver is your largest organ and is [vital to normal body function](#), because it

- Removes toxins from your blood, including chemicals, germs, and bacteria.
- Makes alpha-1 antitrypsin and other proteins you need for blood clotting.
- Produces bile that helps your body absorb fats and vitamins.

Substances that are toxic to the liver in “non-Alphas” may be even more harmful to Alphas. They can be inhaled, swallowed, or absorbed through your skin. These toxins can cause liver damage, which may lead to cirrhosis, liver cancer, and liver failure. They include:

- Alcohol
- Solvents and cyclic organic compounds
- Toxic alkaloids
- Pollutants
- Dietary supplements
- Some prescription and over-the-counter drugs

Think before you drink alcohol

Alcohol is the #1 substance known to cause liver damage. The American Liver Foundation defines excessive alcohol consumption



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as any amount greater than two drinks per day in men and one drink per day in women.

Be careful with acetaminophen and non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (NSAIDS)

Liver damage may be caused by many different drugs, including acetaminophen (Tylenol®). If you take it as prescribed, it's usually safe. If you take too much, all at once or over a period of time, it can damage your liver. It's even more toxic if you regularly have more than two drinks per day.

Indirect data also shows that NSAIDS like ibuprofen and naproxen can cause worse liver cell injury than acetaminophen, and naproxen can cause worse liver cell injury than acetaminophen.

Risk factors related to Alpha-1 lung disease

Every time you breathe, you expose your lungs to elements in the air. Many of these can damage your lungs and affect your ability to breathe well. These include:

- Cigarette and other tobacco smoke (including secondhand smoke)
- Marijuana smoke
- Wood smoke
- Factory smoke
- Toxic fumes
- Solvents
- Dust
- Radon gas
- Bacteria and viruses

Understanding your risks can help you take steps to avoid them to protect your lungs and liver.

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For more in-depth information on this topic, please visit the [Big Fat Reference Guide \(BFRG\)](#). If you are enrolled in AlphaNet's Subscriber Portal, you can access the BFRG [here](#).

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