

Patients often ask about liver transplant center alcohol criteria. Some centers require a specific period of documented sobriety prior to listing for liver transplant. Most centers require six months or more, but we look at that issue a little differently. Throughout my career I have always tried to help as many people as possible. Studies and experience have shown that many patients with acute alcoholic hepatitis will not live six months without a liver transplant. Many programs avoid this subset of patients, while the majority now restrict liver transplantation only after a requirement of a six month period of abstinence from alcohol. Unfortunately, there is a group of patients that won't survive this period of waiting. A recent paper by Mathurin (N Engl J Med 365;19) showed that expeditious liver transplantation in patients with acute alcoholic hepatitis who were unlikely to survive 6 months had excellent survival (nearly 80%) and that a very small percentage of these resumed any alcohol and of these, none had any deleterious effects to their liver. Only one out of four patients who was refused liver transplantation was alive 6 months later.

Due to the data presented above, my team looks at the patient with alcoholic cirrhosis on a case-by-case basis to determine liver transplant candidacy. Given the excellent outcomes my team is offering evaluation for liver transplantation without a 6 month abstinence waiting period. If you or your loved one has been turned down at another center, or is at a center requiring a 6 month or longer waiting time prior to consideration for evaluation, please call or text me at 303-601-5002 to arrange for an evaluation at our center.