

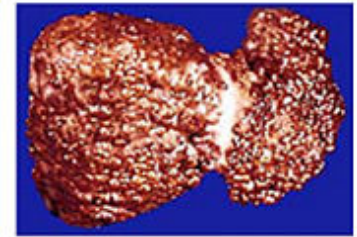
# The UGLY Side of Alcohol

Most people start drinking alcohol because it's fun to be in a social environment where you and others let their guard down and become less inhibited. After all, you always thought it would be fun to get up on the karaoke stage and sing YMCA, but never had the nerve to do it before consuming mass amounts of alcohol.

The freedom that confidence brings is refreshing and freeing—so much so that many people just crack open a few cold ones whenever they need a little boost. After a while though, people tend to feel as if they are living with two personalities, the confident, fun drunk one, and the irritable, withdrawn, sober one.



**Healthy Liver**



**Liver with Cirrhosis**

The liver on the right was removed from a patient who died of cirrhosis of the liver. Note the darkened appearance and many nodules of scar tissue that have developed, deforming the appearance of the liver. When the liver cells turn into scar tissue, they no longer can function normally, and liver failure develops.

**Photo courtesy of Three Rivers Endoscopy Center**

## Side effects of prolonged alcohol use:

- Bloated beer belly
- Intestines become a gaseous mess
- Nasty breath and a pasty mouth
- A long list of dumb things said and done to regret
- Sluggish, depressed, blah personality without alcohol
- Irritability that no healthy person really wants to subject themselves to
- Lack of motivation to accomplish all those things you thought you'd someday do
- A swollen, malfunctioning liver riddled with cirrhosis

## Why alcohol makes people feel “good:”

Alcohol is a depressant. It goes into the bloodstream and entices certain areas of your brain to relax. The first place it dims is the switch that controls your inhibition, making it much easier to say and do all those things you wish you could when you're sober—and quite a few things you probably wouldn't too.

## A better approach to handling life than constantly indulging in alcohol:

Take active steps to raise your self confidence naturally—take a communications class and learn to feel completely comfortable speaking in front of groups, take some risks and tell people what's really on your mind, practice something you enjoy doing and become really great at it, get yourself into clubs and organizations where you'll meet like-minded people in an environment where you already have something in common to talk about.

Imagine having the confidence and happiness that alcohol brings all the time, without the bloated gut, dry mouth, and hangover—it's possible when you discover how to create happiness from within that flows outward, rather than the other way around.