



**ABC Hospice**  
INC.

*A caring touch, a hand of compassion*

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## LIVER DISEASE

Liver disease, or hepatic disease, is a broad term describing any single number of diseases affecting the liver. Cirrhosis, inflammation, tumors, alcohol abuse, and metabolic disorders are some conditions that result in liver disease. Infections, poisons, and inherited conditions can also lead to liver disease.

Being diagnosed with a terminal illness is devastating. ABC Hospice will take this journey with you.

The following criteria can be helpful in determining the eligibility of a patient to qualify for services offered through hospice. ABC Hospice is available to answer any questions you may have.

Patients will be considered to be in the terminal stage of liver disease (life expectancy of six months or less) if they meet the following criteria. (1 and 2 should be present; factors from 3 will lend supporting documentation.):

### 1. The patient should show both a and b:

- a. Prothrombin time prolonged more than 5 seconds over control, or International Normalized Ratio (INR) >1.5
- b. Serum albumin <2.5 gm/dl

### 2. End stage liver disease is present and the patient shows at least one of the following:

- Ascites, refractory to treatment or patient non-compliant
- Spontaneous bacterial peritonitis
- Hepatorenal syndrome (elevated creatinine and BUN with oliguria (<400 ml/day) and urine sodium concentration <10 mEq/l)
- Hepatic encephalopathy, refractory to treatment, or patient non-compliant
- Recurrent variceal bleeding, despite intensive therapy

### 3. Documentation of the following factors will support eligibility for hospice care:

- Progressive malnutrition
- Muscle wasting with reduced strength and endurance
- Continued active alcoholism (>80 gm ethanol/day)
- Hepatocellular carcinoma
- HBsAg (Hepatitis B) positivity
- Hepatitis C refractory to interferon treatment

Patients awaiting liver transplant who otherwise fit the above criteria may be certified for the Medicare hospice benefit, but if a donor organ is procured, the patient should be discharged from hospice.