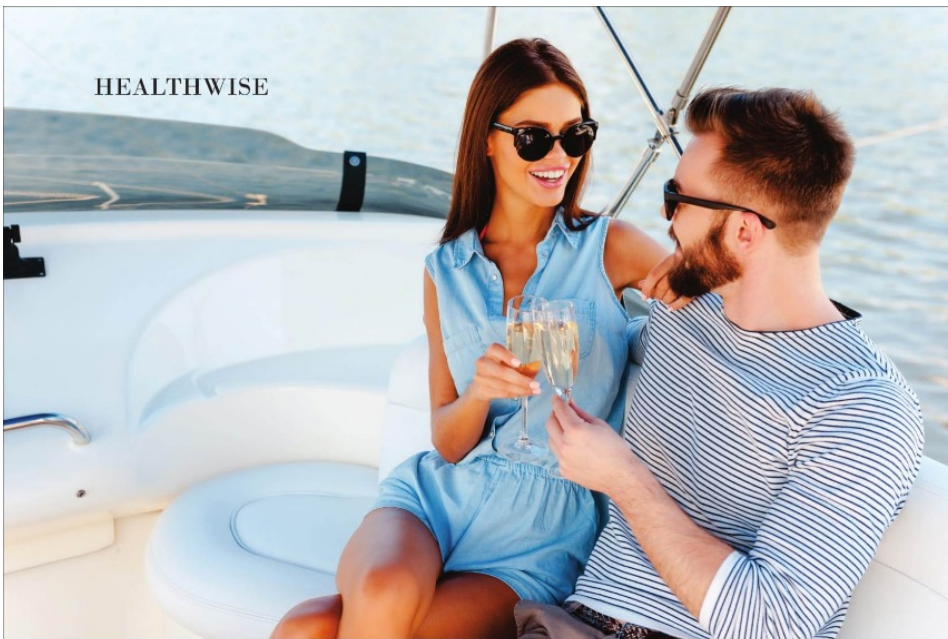


**Coverage For iGenetic Diagnostics**

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**Modern Day Lifestyle Making Alcohol Assessment Liver Testing Essential**



*Alcohol  
& You*



Dr. Prashant Shetty

'Modern Lifestyle'  
is Making Alcohol Assessment  
& Liver Testing Essential,  
says Dr. Prashant Shetty.

**W**ith a population size of 1.3 billion and growing, India's alcohol consumption patterns have been only growing, making it one of the fastest growing markets in the world. Rapid urbanization, growth of the middle class, high economic activity, a host of social cultural influences, especially from the west, is promoting alcohol consumption as a hot trend. Growing pub culture and nightlife have a significant role to play in attracting younger crowds to alcohol. At the same time, laws related to drinking age in alcohol serving and selling industries are not implemented strongly. All these aspects have contributed majorly in increasing cases of liver diseases in the country.

Liver diseases might not have yet featured in the World Health Organisation's (WHO) "Top 10 Global Causes of Death" list, which is topped by heart diseases, followed by stroke, pulmonary and respiratory diseases. However, the trends indicate that it may just be on the verge of breaking into the infamous list, while gaining rapid ground especially in India.

With a wide range of diseases, from jaundice and hepatitis to liver cirrhosis and cancer, in its fold, liver disease in toto results in high number of deaths across the world. One in every five Indians is suffering from liver diseases and 10 lakh new patients are diagnosed with a liver disease every year.

Out of these, liver diseases caused by alcohol consumption form a major part of all liver diseases. As per WHO, alcohol consumption causes 20 to 50% of liver cirrhosis cases worldwide. Incidentally, the 2012 data presented by WHO reveal that age standardized death rates due to liver cirrhosis in India is as high as around 40 per lakh men and around 20 per lakh women. These numbers have surely increased since then considering the trends in sale and consumption of alcohol in India.

### **Alcohol Consumption Trends in India**

Growing at a CAGR rate of 8.8%, the Indian alcohol market is shooting up to breach 16 billion liters consumption mark by 2022. India being world's largest consumer of whiskey constitutes around 60% of world's IMFL market. Also, wine and vodka consumption is increasing at a CAGR rate of 21.8% and 22.8% percent respectively.

With the country absorbing so much alcohol in its blood, undoubtedly it is also on the verge of becoming a nation with highest alcoholic liver disease prevalence.

### **Knowing Alcoholic Liver Diseases**

Around 40 to 80 grams of alcohol per day for men and 20 to 40 grams for women for a reasonable period of 10 to 12 years substantially increases the risks of liver diseases. In a recent Indian study of a sample size of 4413 cases, alcohol consumption was the commonest cause for cirrhosis with 34% of cases being affected by it.

**Alcoholic liver diseases include the following diseases:** steatosis or fatty liver diseases, alcoholic hepatitis, chronic hepatitis, liver fibrosis and cirrhosis. Breaking down these diseases, steatosis or fatty liver disease for Fatty liver there is no proven cure but is a reversible condition after lifestyle changes like abstinence from alcohol, weight loss, low fat diet etc as alcohol consumption causes fat storage around the liver, and thereby limiting its functionality.

In hepatitis caused by alcohol consumption, some swelling emerges in the liver and it triggers symptoms such as vomiting, fever, nausea, abdominal pain, and jaundice. Fibrosis is scarring of liver tissues that prevents liver from working well and leads to cirrhosis or severe scarring of liver tissues and is usually an advanced stage of fatty liver disease, which can lead to liver failure.

## HEALTHWISE

### Need for Testing

Clearly, one would not want to be in these conditions, as not only these diseases can strike early in life, as early as late 30s and early 40s, but also these remain largely incurable and fatal. At the same time, symptoms of liver diseases are deceiving by nature. For instance, fatty liver disease does not necessarily have any associated symptoms and the condition underlies while expressing generic symptoms such as weight loss, poor appetite, physical weakness, fatigue, and so on. Only when it aggravates to a serious nature does it show symptoms of jaundice and enlarged abdomen, but by this time the condition has advanced to cirrhosis.

With alcohol consumption becoming a part of modern lifestyle which rarely people are able to give-up or are coaxed in to continuing, regular alcohol assessment and liver testing remains one of the few effective methods for keeping a check on liver functioning and health.

Advanced testing which involves alcohol assessment consumption with frequency and quantity of consumption is assessed on the basis of the person's physiology and ability to process alcohol. These tests assess liver damage and alcohol content. Timely assessment can put the person back on track to healthy living which will include a life full of energy, exercise, balanced nutrition, reducing dependency on alcohol and nullifying triggers, and controlling blood pressure and cholesterol levels.

### Cheers to healthy living!

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**About The Author :** Dr. Prashant Shetty is a Executive Director (Biochemistry, Haematology & Immunoassay Dept.) iGenetic Diagnostics Private Limited. He has done MD from B.Y.L Nair Ch. Hospital. His areas of specialization are Haematology, Biochemistry, Immunoassay, Clinical Pathology and Serology.

