



# HE Glossary

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**Hepatic Encephalopathy:** Hepatic Encephalopathy, or HE, is a complication of liver disease caused by a buildup of toxins in the blood. The term directly means “disease of the brain” (encephalopathy) “related to the liver” (hepatic). The damaged liver is unable to fully clean the toxins out of the blood, which causes the buildup of chemical substances that eventually travel to the brain. People living with HE can help manage their condition through continuous lifestyle changes and a supportive care team.

## **FOLLOWING ARE OTHER TERMS YOUR DOCTOR MAY USE WHEN DISCUSSING HE AND MANAGEMENT:**

**Alcohol-related Liver Disease:** Alcohol-related Liver Disease is the buildup of extra fat in liver cells caused by the excessive consumption of alcohol. As the disease progresses, inflammation and scarring of the liver may occur, which can impair liver function.

**Ammonia:** Ammonia is a type of toxin that can build up in the blood when the liver is damaged. Ammonia is highly toxic to the brain and causes worsening brain function.

**Asterixis:** Asterixis is a flapping of the hand caused by loss of muscle control.

**Caregiver:** A caregiver could be a relative, partner, friend, neighbor or provider who gives a broad range of assistance to an individual with a chronic or disabling condition.

**Chronic:** A chronic condition is one that lasts three months or more.

**Cirrhosis:** Cirrhosis is a severe form of liver disease when hard scar tissue replaces the soft healthy tissue of the liver. As cirrhosis gets worse, the liver can no longer remove toxins from the blood and symptoms of HE may occur.

**Covert HE:** Covert HE occurs when symptoms are minimal and often go unnoticed. Episodes of Covert HE are spontaneous and often occur once in 6 months.

**Dyspraxia:** Dyspraxia is a neurological disorder that impacts movement and coordination.

**Gastroenterologist:** Gastroenterologists are physicians who are dedicated to managing diseases of the gastrointestinal tract, which includes the stomach and intestines, and liver.

**Guideline-recommended therapy:** A treatment plan that is based on guidance to doctors from leading medical organizations; this guidance is developed with the latest evidence learned through clinical trials.

**Hepatitis:** Hepatitis is the inflammation of the liver, often caused by a virus. The most common types of viral hepatitis are Hepatitis A, Hepatitis B and Hepatitis C.



# HE Glossary (cont.)

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**Hepatologist:** Hepatologists are doctors who specialize in the liver and treatment to manage associated diseases or conditions.

**Nonalcoholic Fatty Liver Disease (NAFLD):** NAFLD is the buildup of extra fat in liver cells, unrelated to alcohol consumption.

**Nurse:** A nurse is a healthcare provider who may act as the first line of communication for HE management, and helps to manage treatment administration, symptoms, side effects and communication with the doctor.

**Overt HE:** Overt HE can be more readily diagnosed, as symptoms are more noticeable and detectable.

**Primary Care Physician:** A primary care physician provides patient's comprehensive care- not limited to a specific problem origin, organ system or diagnosis.

**Psychologist:** Licensed psychologists have the professional training and clinical skills to help people and patients effectively cope with life issues and manage chronic conditions; a psychologist is different than a psychiatrist who is able to prescribe medicine.

**Recurrence:** A recurrence is the return of a sign or symptom of disease after a period of remission.

**Registered Dietician:** A registered dietician is a nutrition expert who can help you determine a specific diet to help you manage your HE.

**Toxins:** Toxins are foreign chemicals or substances causing harm or disease to the body.

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