



Fatty Liver Disease

Fatty Liver Disease Prevention

Lifestyle factors often contribute to the buildup of fat in the liver, and making some changes can help prevent the development of metabolic dysfunction-associated steatotic liver disease (MASLD, formerly known as non-alcoholic fatty liver disease, or NAFLD) and its more severe form, metabolic dysfunction-associated steatohepatitis (MASH, formerly known as non-alcoholic steatohepatitis, or NASH).

Maintain a healthy weight. Overweight and obesity are leading risk factors for fatty liver disease. [Body mass index \(BMI\)](#) is a commonly used indicator of healthy weight. A BMI over 25 is considered overweight and a BMI over 30 is considered obesity. However, some experts think waist circumference and other indicators may be more informative.

Eat a healthy diet. A healthy diet includes all the basic food groups, with a focus on plant-based foods such as fruits, vegetables and whole grains. Keep processed meats, saturated fats and added sugar and salt to a minimum.

Limit alcohol intake. Alcohol is a liver toxin. [Dietary Guidelines for Americans](#) recommend no more than one drink per day for women or two drinks per day for men. A standard-sized drink is equivalent to a 12-ounce bottle of beer, a 5-ounce glass of wine or 1.5 ounces (about a shot) of distilled spirits. Many experts advise that people with liver disease should not drink any alcohol.

Exercise regularly. The federal government's [Physical Activity Guidelines for Adults](#) recommend at least 150 minutes of moderate-intensity aerobic activity (e.g., brisk walking) every week and weight training/muscle-strengthening activities that work all major muscle groups (legs, hips, back, abdomen, chest, shoulders and arms) on two or more days a week. Recent research shows that exercising in short intervals is as effective as exercising for longer stretches of time.

Use medications and supplements exactly as prescribed. Many prescription and over-the-counter medications, dietary supplements and herbal remedies have the potential to harm the liver if not used correctly. Tell your health care providers about all medications, supplements and herbs you use.

Get regular, good-quality sleep. Our bodies need adequate sleep to function. Insufficient sleep is associated with overeating and weight gain. What's more, adequate sleep improves mood and overall quality of life. The [American Academy of Sleep Medicine](#) recommends that adults should get at least seven hours of sleep a night.

Weight-loss medications and surgery

For people with obesity who are at high risk for MASH, weight-loss drugs such as semaglutide (Wegovy) and tirzepatide (Zepbound) may be an option. Bariatric surgery, or procedures that reduce the size of the stomach, can also prevent fatty liver disease progression.

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