Fatty Liver Disease NASH; Nonalcoholic Steatohepatitis

March 21, 2018 By Connie M. Welch

Nonalcoholic fatty liver disease is a condition where too much fat is stored in the liver cells interfering with liver function and scarring the liver. This can develop into a more severe condition known as Nonalcoholic Steatohepatitis or (NASH) where inflammation is present along with liver damage and fat accumulation in the liver leading to severe scarring like cirrhosis.

Non alcoholic fatty liver disease (NAFLD) and Nonalcoholic steatohepatitis (NASH) are conditions that develops in patients who are not alcoholic.

Mayo Clinic states, “Nonalcoholic steatohepatitis, a potentially serious form of the disease, is marked by liver inflammation, which may progress to scarring and irreversible damage. This damage is similar to the damage caused by heavy alcohol use. At its most severe, nonalcoholic steatohepatitis can progress to cirrhosis and liver failure.”

Risk factors for Nonalcoholic steatohepatitis (NASH) are primarily the same as Nonalcoholic Fatty Liver Disease (NAFLD):

*Obesity

*Patients with abnormal amount of lipids or fats in the blood with elevated triglycerides, cholesterol and/or fat phospholipids.

*Glucose intolerance (Pre-diabetes or Type 2 Diabetes).

NASH is seen often in patients who are insulin resistant and patients who have obesity or metabolic syndrome. Most patients do not show symptoms to NASH or with NAFLD.

Some Symptoms with NAFLD and NASH can occur but not always:

*Fatigue

*Not welling well

*Right upper abdominal discomfort

*Enlarged liver can occur

*Enlarged spleen can occur if disease is advanced

Most patients with NASH show no sides of symptoms until the disease has advanced.

Possible signs and symptoms of Nonalcoholic steatohepatitis (NASH) and cirrhosis (advanced scarring) include:

*Ascities which is abdominal swelling

*Enlarged blood vessels beneath the skins surface

*Enlarged breasts in men

*Enlarged spleen

*Red palms

*Yellowing of the skin and eyes (jaundice)

A complication of variceal hemorrhage (bleeding from dilated blood vessels) can occur.

The National Institute of Diabetes and Digestive and Kidney Diseases states, recommended treatment to include:

*Weight loss can reduce fat in the liver, inflammation, and fibrosis.

No medicines have been approved to treat NAFLD and NASH.

Prevention includes:

*Eating a healthy diet and maintaining a healthy weight.

*Exercise

If you have NAFLD and NASH, your doctor may recommend diet changes, weight loss, and exercise. With diet changes, weight loss and exercise can greatly help the patient improve liver condition and function. Discontinue drugs or toxins, along with not drinking any alcohol is recommended in order to stop liver damage from occurring.

Being tested for Hepatitis B and C is highly recommended.

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