

FATTY LIVER DISEASE

The liver is an important organ in the human body. It processes and stores nutrients from foods, breaks down alcohol and drugs, removes toxins from the blood, and produces bile for the digestion of fats.

Fatty liver is the buildup of too much fat in the liver. There are two types of fatty liver disease: Alcoholic fatty liver disease (AFLD) - related to alcohol use; and Non-alcoholic fatty liver disease (NAFLD) - not related to alcohol use.

The accumulation of fat can cause inflammation and scarring in the liver. In more serious cases, fatty liver disease can lead to liver failure.

RISK FACTORS FOR FATTY LIVER DISEASE

- Obesity
- Diabetes
- High cholesterol and triglycerides
- Rapid weight loss
- Heavy alcohol use

SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS OF FATTY LIVER DISEASE

The disease usually has no symptoms. Some signs include:

- Weakness
- Nausea
- Loss of appetite
- Jaundice (yellow skin and eyes)
- Upper right abdominal pain

DIAGNOSIS OF FATTY LIVER DISEASE

- Physical examination to feel for an enlarged liver
- Blood tests or liver function tests
- Imaging tests - ultrasound, CT scan or MRI
- Liver biopsy

TREATMENT AND PREVENTION OF FATTY LIVER DISEASE

There is no medication or surgery to treat fatty liver disease. However, reducing the risk factors can help to improve and prevent the condition:

- Eat a healthy balanced diet
- Exercise regularly
- Lose excess weight gradually (1 to 2 lbs. per week)
- Control diabetes
- Lower cholesterol and triglyceride levels
- Limit sweets and sugary drinks
- Avoid alcohol

For more information about liver health:

American Liver Foundation

www.liverfoundation.org

