



Nonalcoholic Fatty Liver Disease (NAFLD)

What is NAFLD?

It's a disease where fat collects in the liver. It's often just called fatty liver and can affect children, adolescents, and adults.

What are the main causes of fatty liver?

- Overweight, inactivity.
- High blood pressure.
- Diabetes, pre-diabetes, and high blood sugar.
- High cholesterol.

Are there any symptoms?

Usually there are no symptoms. Some people say they have pain in the upper right belly area, and/or they feel tired and generally unwell.

What happens when you have fatty liver?

For most people, fatty liver disease doesn't cause any serious problems. For a small number of people, it gets worse (usually slowly) over time.

In 25% of people with fatty liver: the liver becomes swollen and causes tissue damage. This is called steatohepatitis.



In 25% of people with steatohepatitis (6% of those with fatty liver): scar tissue forms in the liver. This is called fibrosis.



In 25% of people with fibrosis (only 1.5% of those with fatty liver):

- 5% of these (0.1% of those with fatty liver) will develop cirrhosis—even more scar tissue replaces healthy tissue.
- Less than 3% (< 0.1 % of those with fatty liver) will develop liver cancer.

Can fatty liver be treated?

Yes. The best treatment is to change how you live and eat.

DOs

- ✓ 30 minutes a day of exercise (get sweaty and breathe hard!) plus other activities to get moving.
- ✓ Eat healthy, mostly plant-based foods.
- ✓ Lose 5–10% of your body weight gradually.
- ✓ If you have diabetes, high blood pressure, or high cholesterol, learn how to control them.
- ✓ Black coffee *may* be helpful in limiting the damage of fatty liver.

DON'Ts

- ✗ Pop and other sugary drinks and candy.
- ✗ Processed foods, especially with additives or preservatives.
- ✗ Pre-prepared meals/fast foods.
- ✗ Foods containing fructose like corn syrup.
- ✗ Sitting too much—limit screen time to less than 2 hours each day.

Can I drink alcohol?

If you have **simple** fatty liver, stick to safe drinking guidelines..

https://ccsa.ca/sites/default/files/2023-01/CCSA_Canadas_Guidance_on_Alcohol_and_Health_Final_Report_en.pdf

See Public Summary on page 1.



If your fatty liver is more **advanced** (not just simple), you should **AVOID** alcohol entirely. **For more information on fatty liver**, visit the Canadian Liver Foundation website.

<https://www.liver.ca>

