

We're here to help.

At AdventHealth Medical Group Fatty Liver Disease, our program offers a multidisciplinary approach, where the experts are brought to you so that you have access to complete care from the onset. Your liver specialist will ensure that complete and appropriate testing is done to establish the right diagnosis. We offer individualized diagnostic testing as well as therapeutics. Your doctor will determine the right treatment plan for you, which might include lifestyle modification, weight loss medicines, nutritional counseling, meal replacement programs, weight loss procedures or a combination of these.

Our specialists actively collaborate with the AdventHealth Clinical Research Institute, where studies are currently being conducted to better understand this disease and develop improved treatments. We are dedicated to taking care of the whole patient and remain committed to providing the best care possible for you and your family.



AdventHealth Medical Group

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Fatty Liver Disease

Diagnosis and Treatments



AdventHealth
Medical Group



A Common and Potentially Serious Condition

Fatty liver disease is a condition in which accumulated fat in the liver can lead to swelling and inflammation, which over time may cause liver scarring, cirrhosis, and related health problems. This serious health issue occurs in up to 25 percent of Americans and is frequently caused by excess weight and obesity. You are also more likely to develop fatty liver disease if you have diabetes, high lipids and high blood pressure.

Currently, no medications have been approved to treat fatty liver disease, but weight loss can stop inflammation and reverse scarring in the liver.

What You Should Know

Fat build-up causes stress within the liver. In some people, this leads to inflammation, a condition known as non-alcoholic steatohepatitis (NASH). Certain conditions, particularly diabetes, can make inflammation worse and cause scarring to build up faster. Drinking alcohol will also cause inflammation to worsen and scarring to occur more quickly. We recommend patients with NASH do not consume any alcohol.

- Even those who don't drink alcohol, or don't drink excessively, have the potential to develop liver disease. Non-alcoholic fatty liver disease (NAFLD) is a common condition, with liver inflammation and the risk for scarring present in six to seven percent of Americans.
- About one-third of those with liver inflammation will have some degree of scarring. Some will develop severe scarring, a condition known as cirrhosis. Cirrhosis can be life-threatening and increases your risk for developing liver cancer.
- There is currently no definitive medicine to treat fatty liver disease, but it can be prevented from progressing by stopping the inflammation.

Diagnosing Fatty Liver Disease

Fatty liver disease can be diagnosed with blood and imaging tests. It is often discovered by chance, when tests are done for other reasons. If blood or imaging tests reveal liver abnormalities, your doctor will perform additional testing to rule out other liver diseases and to test for scarring.

Risk Factors

People who have a body mass index (BMI) of greater than 27 are at higher risk for fatty liver disease. Beyond this:

- People who gain weight in the abdomen (central distribution of fatty tissue around your organs) are at greater risk compared to those with fat elsewhere. This weight distribution is more common in men, putting them at higher risk.
- Fatty liver disease typically occurs in conjunction with other obesity-related conditions, such as high blood pressure, high cholesterol, sleep apnea and most importantly, diabetes.

Symptoms

Fatty liver disease is often silent, much like high blood pressure, diabetes or heart disease. You might have fat accumulating in your liver but won't know it unless abnormalities appear in blood tests or an imaging.

Treatments

Weight loss is the most effective treatment for this disease. It can stop inflammation and even reverse scarring in some cases. Even a moderate amount of weight loss can help. For some, bariatric surgery is the most effective way to quickly lose weight and thereby treat fatty liver disease. Ninety percent of patients show improvement after weight-loss surgery.

In fact, the liver has a high capacity to repair itself if fatty liver disease is identified early. At its early stages, this disease is reversible. Researchers are also actively working on finding medicines to help slow down and hopefully reverse this disease.