

WHAT YOU SHOULD KNOW ABOUT NONALCOHOLIC FATTY LIVER DISEASE

In the Clinic
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What Is Nonalcoholic Fatty Liver Disease?

Nonalcoholic fatty liver disease (NAFLD) means you have too much fat in your liver. If there is enough fat and it has been there long enough, your liver could be damaged and not work as well as it should.

What Are the Risk Factors?

You may be at higher risk if you:

- Are obese
- Have diabetes
- Have high cholesterol
- Are a woman with polycystic ovarian syndrome

What Are the Symptoms?

Most people who have NAFLD do not have any symptoms. If you have had the disease for a long time, you could show such symptoms as:

- Very itchy skin
- Yellowing of the skin and eyes (jaundice)
- Loss of muscle tissue

How Is It Diagnosed?

- Your doctor will ask you about your medical history and give you a physical examination. He or she will feel your abdomen to see if your liver is larger than normal.
- You will get a blood test.
- You might have imaging tests, such as a CT scan or an ultrasound, of your abdomen. This helps your doctor see how much fat is in your liver.
- Some people may have a liver biopsy. This is when a needle is used to get a small piece of your liver for laboratory studies.

How Is It Treated?

- The best way to treat NAFLD is by losing weight. This means doing more physical activity. Doctors suggest exercising for at least 20 to 30 minutes per day.
- Losing weight also means changing your diet. Reducing how much you eat may be more important than changing what you eat.



- There are some medicines that may help. Ask your doctor if medicine is right for you.
- If you have NAFLD, be sure to follow up with your doctor regularly.
- In rare cases, you may need a liver transplant. This means a surgeon takes out your liver and replaces it with liver tissue from another person.

Questions for My Doctor

- What is causing my fatty liver?
- Should I take medicine to treat it?
- Is it safe for me to exercise? How should I start?
- What is the best diet to follow?
- Can I cure my fatty liver?
- Am I at risk for cirrhosis?
- Will I eventually need a liver transplant?
- Should I see a specialist?

For More Information



National Institute of Diabetes and Digestive and Kidney Diseases

www.niddk.nih.gov/health-information/liver-disease/nafl-d-nash

American College of Gastroenterology

<http://patients.gi.org/topics/fatty-liver-disease-nafl-d>