The Progression of Liver Disease

Understanding the stages of liver disease

There are many potential causes of liver disease. Many people with liver disease do not look or feel sick while the damage is happening. Once symptoms appear, it is often too late to reverse the damage.

Common Causes of Liver Disease

- Viruses
- Poor diet and/or obesity
- Excessive alcohol use
- Reactions to medications, street drugs, or toxic chemicals
- Autoimmune diseases
- Genetics

Stages of Liver Disease

- Healthy Liver
- Fatty Liver: Fat deposits in and around the liver lead to inflammation (swelling)
- Cirrhosis: Severe scarring of liver cells; may lead to liver cancer
- Hepatocellular Fibrosis: Swelling of the liver and hardening of liver cells
- Liver Failure and Liver Cancer

In the stages of fatty liver or early fibrosis, it may be possible to reverse the damage and return to a healthy liver once the cause of the damage is identified.

Questions to Ask Your Doctor

1. What is the underlying cause of my liver disease?
2. At what stage is my disease and is the damage reversible?
3. What are the symptoms I can expect?
4. What type of testing will I need to monitor my disease progression?
5. What treatments are available for the cause of my liver disease?
6. Are there any support groups or resources you’d recommend?

To learn more about liver disease and liver health, visit LiverFoundation.org or call 1-800-GO-LIVER.