



Facts At-A-Glance

- The liver is the second largest organ in your body and is located under your rib cage on the right side.
- The liver processes what you eat and drink into energy and nutrients your body can use.
- The liver can repair itself and create new healthy liver tissue.
- Eating a healthy diet and exercising regularly are important to liver wellness.
- There are more than 100 liver diseases.
- Liver disease is one of the top 10 causes of death in the U.S.
- One out of every 10 Americans is affected by liver disease.
- Some liver diseases such as hepatitis A, hepatitis B, hepatitis C, fatty liver disease, NASH, and alcohol-related liver disease can be prevented.
- There are vaccines for hepatitis A and hepatitis B.



Your Liver. Your Life.

American Liver Foundation
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Liver Wellness

Increasing Public Awareness
of Liver Health



An Introduction to Liver Care



Your Liver. Your Life.



Why is the liver important?

The liver is the second largest organ in your body and is located under your rib cage on the right side. It weighs about three pounds and is shaped like a football that is flat on one side.

The liver performs many jobs in your body. It processes what you eat and drink into energy and nutrients your body can use. The liver also removes harmful substances from your blood.

What are ways to take care of the liver?

Have a Healthy Lifestyle

Eating a healthy diet and exercising regularly help the liver to work well.

- Eat foods from all the food groups: grains, fruits, vegetables, meat and beans, milk, and oil
- Maintain a healthy weight

Limit the Amount of Alcohol You Drink

Alcohol can damage or destroy liver cells.

- Talk to your doctor about what amount of alcohol to drink is right for you

Manage Your Medications

When medicines are taken incorrectly — by taking too much or the wrong type or by mixing — the liver can be harmed.

- Learn about medicines and how they can affect the liver
- Follow dosing instructions
- Talk to a doctor or pharmacist about the medicines you are taking

Mixing alcohol and medicines can harm your liver, even if they are not taken at the same time.

Avoid Breathing in or Touching Toxins

Toxins can injure liver cells.

- Limit direct contact with toxins from cleaning and aerosol products, insecticides, chemicals, and additives in cigarettes
- Do not smoke

Common Liver Diseases and Prevention

One out of every 10 Americans is affected by liver disease. Liver disease is one of the top 10 causes of death in the United States. There are more than 100 liver diseases. Below are some of the most common liver diseases, and ways you can help prevent them and keep your liver healthy:

Hepatitis A

Hepatitis A is a liver disease caused by the hepatitis A virus (HAV). HAV can cause the liver to swell and not work well.

Prevention: Hepatitis A vaccination is the best way to prevent HAV. Other ways to stop the spread of HAV are:

- Always washing your hands with soap and warm water immediately after using the bathroom or changing a diaper
- Always washing your hands with soap and warm water before preparing or eating food

Hepatitis B

Hepatitis B is a liver disease caused by the hepatitis B virus (HBV). HBV can cause the liver to swell and can lead to cirrhosis and liver cancer.

Prevention: Hepatitis B vaccination is the best way to prevent HBV. Other ways to stop the spread of HBV are:

- Not sharing needles
- Practicing safe sex
- Not sharing razors, toothbrushes, or other personal items
- Using only clean needles for tattoos and body piercings

Hepatitis C

Hepatitis C is a liver disease caused by the hepatitis C virus (HCV). HCV can cause the liver to swell and can lead to cirrhosis and liver cancer.

Prevention: There is no vaccine to prevent HCV.

The only way to prevent HCV is to avoid direct contact with infected blood. Other ways to stop the spread of HCV are:

- Not sharing needles
- Practicing safe sex
- Not sharing razors, toothbrushes, or other personal items
- Using only clean needles for tattoos and body piercings
- Getting medical care if you are exposed to blood or needle sticks at work

Fatty Liver Disease

Fatty liver disease is the build up of fat in liver cells. It can cause the liver to swell and can lead to cirrhosis.

Prevention: Ways to prevent fatty liver disease are:

- Eating a healthy diet
- Maintaining a healthy weight
- Exercising regularly
- Limiting the amount of alcohol you drink
- Maintaining a normal cholesterol level

NASH (Nonalcoholic Steatohepatitis)

NASH is a type of fatty liver disease. NASH causes the liver to swell and become damaged due to reasons unrelated to alcohol.

Prevention: Ways to prevent NASH are:

- Eating a healthy diet
- Maintaining a healthy weight
- Exercising regularly
- Limiting the amount of alcohol you drink
- Maintaining a normal cholesterol level

Alcohol-Related Liver Disease

Alcohol-related liver disease is caused by drinking too much alcohol. It can cause the liver to swell and can lead to cirrhosis.

Prevention: The best way to prevent alcohol-related liver disease is to not drink more alcohol than what your doctor recommends.