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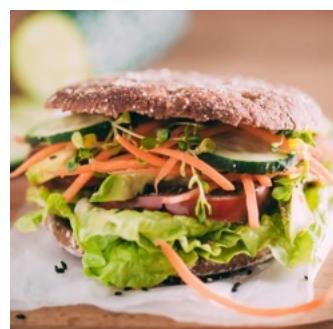
BOOST YOUR LIVER HEALTH WITH THIS QUICK AND HEALTHY AVOCADO SANDWICH

Rahul Maheshwari, M.D., highlights the American Liver Foundation's Avocado and Veggie Sandwich recipe as a simple, nutritious way to support overall wellness.

By Rahul Maheshwari, M.D. | Published on December 26, 2024

7 min read

Liver cancer is a complex disease often linked to underlying conditions like cirrhosis, hepatitis, or fatty liver disease. In an interview with *The Educated Patient*, Rahul Maheshwari, M.D., a transplant hepatologist and medical director of hepatocellular carcinoma at Piedmont Transplant Institute, shares invaluable insights into liver cancer prevention, early detection and cutting-



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American Liver Foundation (ALF), he also emphasizes the importance of emotional support and patient empowerment during what can be a challenging journey.

As part of his efforts to inspire healthy eating habits, Maheshwari highlights an easy and delicious recipe for an avocado and vegetable sandwich. Packed with heart-healthy fats, fiber and vitamins, this simple sandwich showcases how small dietary changes can support overall health while being both satisfying and quick to prepare.

Avocado and Veggie Sandwich

Nutrition Facts Per Serving (2)

- Calories: 200
- Total Fat: 6g
- Saturated Fat: 1g
- Trans Fat: 0g
- Sodium: 0mg
- Total Carbohydrate: 26g
- Dietary Fiber: 3g
- Sugars: 3.5g
- Protein: 4g

Ingredients

- 1 slice whole grain bread (about 2 ounces)
- 1/4 ripe avocado
- 1/4 cup sliced cucumber
- 1/4 cup shredded carrots

- 1 teaspoon lemon juice
- Freshly ground black pepper, to taste

Instructions

1. Slice the avocado and mash it lightly with a fork, then slice the cucumber.
2. Spread the mashed avocado evenly over one side of the whole grain bread. Layer the sliced cucumber, shredded carrots and romaine lettuce on top of the avocado spread.
3. Drizzle lemon juice over the veggies and season with freshly ground black pepper to taste.
4. Top with the other slice of whole grain bread, cut in half and enjoy!

This recipe was [originally](#) published on the ALF's website as a part of its 30-day meal plan.

What are the most common causes or risk factors for liver cancer?

Rahul Maheshwari, M.D.: Most liver cancers are found in individuals who have underlying cirrhosis of the liver. Additionally, infections such as hepatitis B and C, and lifestyle factors such as alcohol abuse, obesity and smoking are risk factors. Finally, family history of liver cancer is also important.

Are there early warning signs or symptoms of liver cancer that patients should be aware of?

RM: Liver cancer in its early stage can be completely asymptomatic, so this is why it is so important for anyone

routine screening imaging and labs to monitor for liver cancer. In the intermediate to advanced stages, symptoms such as unintentional weight loss, poor appetite, abdominal pain, swelling and jaundice can occur.

What are the primary treatment options for liver cancer, and how do they differ depending on the stage?

RM: If liver cancer is found early and found in the liver alone without spread into any major vessels or surrounding lymph nodes or organs, treatment options are focused on the potential for cure. These options may be resection, radiation or chemoembolization via the arterial supply, ablation, and/or eventually a potential curative liver transplant. If cancer is found to invade the major blood vessels or cancer found outside the liver, treatment is usually systemic chemotherapy/immunotherapy led by a medical oncologist.

Are there lifestyle changes or preventive measures that can lower the risk of developing liver cancer?

RM: Control of risk factors for fatty liver disease such as diabetes and cholesterol control, weight loss, and focus on diet and exercise. Avoid excessive alcohol use and smoking. If you have hepatitis B or C, then seek appropriate treatment.

What is the connection between liver cancer and other conditions, like fatty liver disease or diabetes?

RM: There is an increased risk of liver cancer in patients with fatty liver disease who have scarring/fibrosis in the liver. Focusing on lifestyle medication to control the multiple risk factors that cause fatty liver is of utmost importance.

How can patients and their families cope with the emotional and mental health challenges of a liver cancer diagnosis?

RM: Although getting a new diagnosis of liver cancer can be overwhelming, know that the treatment options for liver cancer are the most advanced they have ever been in history. Also, there are many patients and patient families that you can connect with as a support network who have been through the same journey. Expert multidisciplinary liver cancer experts will help guide you every step of the way.

What recent advancements in liver cancer treatment or research are most promising for patients?

RM: Immunotherapy for liver cancer has really changed the outcomes for many patients. Additionally, there is a lot of work ongoing using the combination of immunotherapy and local therapy directed at the cancer to potentially provide a dual-phase approach with promising outcomes. More patients than ever are now able to be offered future liver transplants as a cure.

What questions should patients ask their healthcare providers to better understand their diagnosis and treatment options?

RM: The first question any patient who newly gets diagnosed with liver cancer should ask is, "Should I be referred to a tertiary care transplant center who has a liver cancer multidisciplinary team of transplant hepatologist, transplant surgeons, interventional radiologist and medical oncologist to discuss my case to help guide me to the best (potentially

What advice would you give to patients who are feeling overwhelmed by their diagnosis or treatment process?

RM: Take a deep breath. Although scary news to hear, as above, there have been so many advances in the field of liver cancer that you may have more options than you think, and some of those options could lead to a curative outcome.

Is there anything else you'd like our audience to know?

RM: If you have chronic liver disease, cirrhosis or any of the other risk factors identified above, be your own advocate and make sure you are getting proper screening every six months for liver cancer because the most common symptom of liver cancer is no symptoms at all.

In addition to liver-healthy recipes, the ALF offers a simple liver health quiz, available in [English](#) and [Spanish](#). To learn more about liver health, including education, awareness and screening, visit [Think Liver Think Life](#), and to help researchers find better treatments and cures for liver diseases, visit [ALF's Patient Registry](#).

This month, the ALF is also highlighting [Caring Connections](#), an online peer-to-peer support program that connects patients and caregivers facing the challenges of living with liver disease with trained peer mentors.

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