

[CONNECTIONS: WHAT I WISH I KNEW ABOUT MASH](#)

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# MASH and Your Emotions: Coping, Connecting, and Finding Strength

Being diagnosed with MASH can be an emotional rollercoaster ride — but focusing on what you can control and leaning on your support network can help you get through it.



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## I'm Strong Enough to Handle a MASH Diagnosis

Jeff is working through the anxiety, fear, and shame of his recent MASH diagnosis. Susan shares how she has handled complex emotions while living with MASH for two decades.

shame about the past, if lifestyle choices have contributed to your disease.<sup>[1]</sup>

Then there's the present. Having MASH can make it difficult to keep up with your daily activities, from work and household chores to hobbies and social engagements. That, in turn, can take a toll on your mental well-being.<sup>[2]</sup>

"It's also common for people to have family members who had [liver disease](#), and to have watched these family members die from it. And [you] may feel like [you're] marching toward that same outcome," says [Kara Wegermann, MD](#), a gastroenterologist and transplant hepatologist at Duke Health in Durham, North Carolina, and a volunteer for the American Liver Foundation.

No matter what you're feeling, you're not alone: Nearly 15 million Americans are living with MASH.<sup>[3]</sup> Here's how to work through your emotions and take charge of your physical and mental health.

## **What I Wish I Knew: Focus on What You Can Do to Manage MASH**

**“ I CAN ONLY DO WHAT I CAN DO RIGHT NOW AND TODAY, AND MOVE FORWARD AND TRY NOT TO WORRY ABOUT THINGS**

MASH is a complex disease that's caused by many factors, some of which you can control and some of which you can't, says Dr. Wegermann. For example, you can't control factors such as your age, genetics, or ethnicity, all of which can play a role in MASH development. But you can take steps to lose weight if needed, [manage your blood sugar](#), follow a healthy diet, and stay active, all of which can help stop MASH from progressing.<sup>[4]</sup>

Remember, knowledge is power. "It's better to know you have MASH and take the opportunity to make changes and monitor the condition," says Wegermann. In its early stages, you can stop this type of liver disease from progressing, and it can even be reversible with the right treatment and management plan.<sup>[4]</sup>

## **What I Wish I Knew: Support Is Essential When You Have MASH**

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— Jeff Beckley, diagnosed with MASH in 2024



Friends, family, and other loved ones can not only help you navigate the emotions of a [MASH diagnosis](#), but also support your efforts to manage the condition.

For starters, you can bring a trusted loved one or friend to your appointments to ask questions, share a point of view you may not think of, and take notes. “I love when people bring their families, because I can say, ‘Who does the grocery shopping? Who does the cooking?’ and we can discuss what they’re going to eat,” says Wegermann.

Members of your social circle can also become accountability partners. For example, “Exercise is good for everyone, so you can make it a family thing by going for a walk after dinner,” says Wegermann. “Then it becomes quality time you spend together, and it doesn’t feel like this isolating thing. You can all improve your health together.”

If you live alone, consider getting a pet, Wegermann suggests. “I’ve had people find that getting a dog is helpful, because the dog has to go for a walk every day. You can’t choose not to do it; the dog has to go out,” she says. “But it comes with companionship that makes it feel less like a chore and more like you’re doing something for someone else.”

And if you ever want to talk with someone else who “gets it,” you can connect with other people living with MASH through organizations such as the [American Liver Foundation](#) and [Liver Education Advocates](#).

## What Your Doctor Wants You to Know: Honesty Is Key

ask for a referral to a specialist like a hepatologist to talk further."

## Resources We Trust

[Cleveland Clinic: Metabolic Dysfunction-Associated Steatohepatitis \(MASH\)](#)

[MyMASHTeam: My Life With MASLD/NAFLD: Symptoms, Diagnosis, and More](#)

[American Liver Foundation: Patient Stories](#)

[Liver Education Advocates: Fatty Liver Disease: A Family Issue](#)

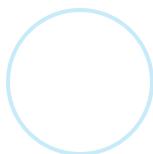
[Fatty Liver Alliance: MASLD and MASH Community and Support Systems](#)

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