

METABOLIC DYSFUNCTION-ASSOCIATED STEATOHEPATITIS (MASH)

What is metabolic dysfunction-associated steatohepatitis (MASH)

Metabolic dysfunction-associated steatohepatitis (MASH), formerly nonalcoholic steatohepatitis (NASH), is an advanced form of metabolic dysfunction-associated steatotic liver disease (MASLD), formerly nonalcoholic fatty liver disease (NAFLD), in which there is extra fat and inflammation (swelling) of the liver.

Who is at risk for MASH?

MASH tends to develop among people who are overweight or obese, have diabetes, high cholesterol, and high triglycerides. MASH most often occurs among people who are between the ages of 40 and 60 but can occur in any age group. It is more common in women than men.

Symptoms

MASH may not cause symptoms for years. It, like MASLD, can be a “silent disease” of the liver. When symptoms occur, they can include feeling very tired and having pain in the upper right side of your abdomen, which is where the liver is located.

How does MASH affect the liver?

People with MASH are at higher risk for developing scar tissue of the liver. Mild or moderate scarring is called fibrosis. Advanced scarring is called cirrhosis.

Complications

If MASH causes scar formation in the liver, symptoms can become more serious. Some symptoms can include fluid buildup in the belly, yellowing of skin and eyes (jaundice), severe itching, and spider vein blood vessels beneath the skin's surface. People who have MASH that advances to cirrhosis may experience additional complications, including liver cancer. In the U.S., MASLD affects between 80 and 100 million individuals, among whom nearly 25% progress to MASH. About 11% of MASH patients will develop cirrhosis or liver failure. MASH has become a leading cause of liver transplantation in the U.S.

Treatment

Weight loss through change in diet and exercise is often the first treatment recommendation. Doctors also recommend controlling other health issues such as diabetes and cholesterol. They may suggest adding Vitamin E and coffee to your diet. These products will not cure MASH, but they may help keep liver damage from getting worse. Speak to your doctor about a new treatment option for MASH patients who have progressed to fibrosis.

To learn more about MASH or view all of our free resources scan the QR code below: liverfoundation.org/resource-center.

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For questions about liver wellness and disease, or for emotional support to patients at the point of crisis and information on local resources including physician referrals, please contact our Helpline at 1-800-465-4837.

