

METABOLIC DYSFUNCTION-ASSOCIATED STEATOTIC LIVER DISEASE (MASLD)

What is metabolic dysfunction-associated steatotic liver disease (MASLD)

Metabolic dysfunction-associated steatotic liver disease (MASLD), formerly nonalcoholic fatty liver disease (NAFLD) is a medical condition in which there is an excessive buildup of fat in the liver. It often has no symptoms in its early stages.

Causes & risks for MASLD

Causes of MASLD include excess weight/obesity, type 2 diabetes, high cholesterol, high triglycerides, high blood pressure, and excessive fat in the belly area. Other risks can include medications and Wilson's Disease. It is estimated that 80-100 million Americans are affected by MASLD, and it is present in up to 75% of overweight people and in 90% of people with severe obesity. MASLD is the most common form of childhood liver disease in the U.S., rising more than 100% over the past 20 years, due to increased childhood obesity.

How is MASLD diagnosed?

MASLD is diagnosed through a medical history review, physical exam, BMI (Body Mass Index, a body fat analysis), and liver enzyme tests. Other tests may include ultrasound, MRI and/or CT scan. An elastography test may be done to measure liver stiffness.

Some people with MASLD have normal liver enzyme levels. If you have normal liver enzymes but also have the above-stated risks for MASLD, speak with your doctor about further testing.

Can MASLD be prevented?

MASLD may be prevented by eating nutritious foods, maintaining a healthy body weight, and getting regular physical activity. A dietitian can help you plan healthy meals, or you can find healthy eating tips by going to myplate.gov. Many doctors advise patients with MASLD to avoid all drinks containing alcohol, because alcohol can make any existing liver disease worse.

Can MASLD be reversed?

MASLD may reverse with attention to diet and weight loss.

Is there medicine to treat MASLD?

Researchers are working on medications that may help people with MASLD and there is a new treatment available for people with metabolic dysfunction-associated steatohepatitis (MASH), formerly nonalcoholic steatohepatitis (NASH), who have progressed to fibrosis. Speak to your doctor about the latest information or to learn about clinical trials that you may be eligible for as part of research to find treatments and cures.

To learn more about MASLD 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.

