

Healthy eating for a healthy liver

WORLD
LIVER
DAY



Nutrition and liver disease

Unhealthy eating habits can increase the risk of liver disease.

Diets high in sugar, fat, and processed foods can lead to obesity, type 2 diabetes, and high cholesterol. These conditions are linked to a liver condition called **metabolic dysfunction-associated steatotic liver disease (MASLD)**, which is a buildup of fat in the liver.

Some fat in the liver is normal, but if it makes up more than 5% of the liver's weight, it can cause problems.

Over time, MASLD can lead to inflammation, liver scarring, and even liver cancer.

MASLD is often symptom-free in its early stages, so early detection is important. Ask your doctor regularly for a quick, non-invasive elastography scan (Fibroscan®) to measure your liver stiffness.



MASLD is now the most common form of liver disease worldwide, affecting over 30% of people globally.



The prevalence of MASLD is even higher in countries where obesity, diabetes, and other metabolic issues are common.

The rise in these risk factors is making MASLD more widespread and **a growing concern for public health.**

MASLD is treatable and can even be reversible through a healthy diet

A balanced diet low in saturated fats, added sugars, and processed foods can significantly reduce the risk of MASLD.

By focusing on whole foods rich in fibre, healthy fats, and antioxidants, you can avoid excess liver fat accumulation and inflammation: two major contributors to liver disease progression.

Dietary changes can also help reverse early-stage liver diseases. Weight management, through calorie restriction and increased physical activity, can help prevent the progression of MASLD and related liver complications.

Losing even 5-10% of body weight can reduce liver fat and inflammation, and improve liver function.





Foods that promote liver health

Olive oil: High in monounsaturated fats, it has anti-inflammatory effects beneficial for liver function.

Fatty fish: Rich in omega-3 fatty acids, fish like salmon help reduce liver fat and inflammation.

Leafy greens and cruciferous vegetables: Vegetables such as kale, spinach, and broccoli are packed with fibre, antioxidants, and essential vitamins that help detoxify and protect the liver.

Berries, nuts, and seeds: High in polyphenols and healthy fats, they support liver metabolism and combat oxidative stress.



Foods that are harmful to liver health

Sugary beverages and processed foods: High in added sugars, they contribute to fat buildup and liver inflammation.

Red and processed meats: These foods are often high in saturated fats, which can increase liver fat and inflammation.

Ultra-Processed Foods (UPFs): Studies link UPFs with increased risks of liver disease due to their low nutritional value and high levels of unhealthy additives, preservatives, and refined sugars.

What diet should I follow?

The **Mediterranean diet** is one of the most effective diets for managing liver health due to its high content of healthy fats, polyphenols, and low levels of saturated fats and processed foods. Other dietary approaches, like **low-carbohydrate diets** and **intermittent fasting**, have also shown promise in reducing liver fat and improving liver markers, but the long-term efficacy of these diets requires further research.



Your liver deserves care at every stage: starting today makes a difference.

Healthy eating isn't accessible for everyone, with government policies and commercial forces shaping food environments. Dietary guidelines, health labeling, zoning laws, and school meal programmes can foster healthier choices.

While many barriers to healthy eating are beyond personal control, you can empower yourself by staying informed and making small, manageable changes to improve your diet.