

# Nonalcoholic Fatty Liver Disease (NAFLD)

## What is nonalcoholic fatty liver disease (NAFLD)?

Nonalcoholic fatty liver disease (NAFLD)\*, now called metabolic dysfunction-associated steatotic liver disease (MASLD), 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 NAFLD

Causes of NAFLD 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 NAFLD, and it is present in up to 75% of overweight people and in 90% of people with severe obesity. NAFLD 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 NAFLD Diagnosed?

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

## Can NAFLD be Prevented?

NAFLD 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 | U.S. Department of Agriculture](#).

Many doctors advise patients with NAFLD to avoid all drinks containing alcohol, because alcohol can make any existing liver disease worse.

## Can NAFLD be Reversed?

NAFLD may reverse with attention to diet and weight loss.

## Is There Medicine to Treat NAFLD and NASH?

Researchers are working on medications that may help people with NAFLD and there is a new treatment available for people with nonalcoholic steatohepatitis (NASH)\*, now called metabolic dysfunction-associated steatohepatitis, 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 NAFLD simply scan this QR code or view all of our free resources available in our Resource Center: [liverfoundation.org/resource-center](https://liverfoundation.org/resource-center).**

\*The nomenclature for nonalcoholic fatty liver disease (NAFLD) has recently changed to metabolic dysfunction associated steatotic liver disease (MASLD). Nonalcoholic steatohepatitis (NASH) has been renamed to metabolic dysfunction associated steatohepatitis (MASH). Fatty liver disease is now called steatotic liver disease.

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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.

