

WHAT YOU SHOULD KNOW ABOUT METABOLIC DYSFUNCTION-ASSOCIATED STEATOTIC LIVER DISEASE

In the Clinic
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What Is Metabolic Dysfunction-Associated Steatotic Liver Disease?

Metabolic dysfunction-associated steatotic liver disease (MASLD), previously known as nonalcoholic fatty liver disease (NAFLD), is a condition where you have too much fat in your liver and at least 1 of the following risk factors:

- Diabetes or insulin resistance (meaning that your body has difficulty handling blood sugar)
- Obesity or excess fat in your waist area
- High cholesterol
- High blood pressure

If there is too much fat and it has been there long enough, your liver could be damaged and not work as well as it should. In severe cases, cirrhosis or liver failure and liver cancer can develop over time. Alcohol intake can make the condition worse.

What Are the Risk Factors?

You may be at higher risk if you have the risk factors listed above.

What Are the Symptoms?

Most people who have MASLD do not have any symptoms. If you have had the disease for a long time, you could show such symptoms as:

- Very itchy skin
- Jaundice (yellowing of the skin and eyes)

How Is It Diagnosed?

- Your doctor will ask you about your medical history, perform a physical examination, and feel your abdomen to see whether your liver is larger than normal.
- You will get a blood test.
- You might have imaging tests, such as a special type of ultrasound that helps your doctor see how much fat and scarring is in your liver.
- A liver biopsy is rarely needed.

How Is It Treated?

- The best way to treat MASLD is by losing weight and controlling your blood sugar if you have diabetes. This can be accomplished by improving your diet and exercising 30 minutes a day on most days of the week. Eating a diet that is low



in calories, carbohydrates, and saturated fats but high in fiber and unsaturated fats is recommended.

- Avoid alcohol, as alcohol intake can increase liver fat and worsen liver damage.
- Some medicines may help, including some that help you lose weight or control your blood sugar. Ask your doctor if medicine is right for you.
- Be sure to follow up with your doctor regularly.
- In rare cases where the damage to your liver is severe, you may need a liver transplant, where a surgeon removes your liver and replaces it with liver tissue from another person.

Questions for My Doctor

- What is causing my fatty liver?
- Should I take medicine to treat it?
- Is it safe for me to exercise? How should I start?
- What is the best diet to follow?
- Can I cure my fatty liver?
- Am I at risk for cirrhosis or liver failure?
- Will I eventually need a liver transplant?
- Should I see a specialist?

For More Information



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National Institute of Diabetes and Digestive and Kidney Diseases

www.niddk.nih.gov/health-information/liver-disease/naflid-nash

American College of Gastroenterology

<https://gi.org/topics/steatotic-liver-disease-masld>