

# Fatty Liver Disease (MASLD)

Metabolic Dysfunction-Associated Steatotic Liver Disease (MASLD)—formerly known as NAFLD—is a condition where the body stores extra fat in the liver. It is closely linked to "metabolic health," which includes how your body manages weight, blood sugar, and cholesterol.

While a small amount of fat in the liver is common, too much fat can cause the liver to become inflamed or "stressed." Over time, this stress can lead to permanent scarring (fibrosis) if not managed.

The good news is that the liver is a very resilient organ, and in many cases, this condition can be improved or even reversed.

## Who is at risk of developing MASLD?

People with following are at risk of developing MASLD:

- Type 2 Diabetes
- Weight &
- Waist Size: Carrying extra weight, particularly around the middle, increases the risk of liver fat.
- High Blood Pressure or Cholesterol

## What tests are done to look for MASLD?

MASLD (Fatty Liver) is often first suspected when a routine blood test from your GP shows a slight abnormality in your liver enzymes. Because the liver rarely causes symptoms in the early stages, these blood tests are our first "window" into how your liver is functioning.

To understand the results better, a two-step approach is used:

1. The FIB-4 Score: This uses your age and your blood test results to help determine if there is a risk of significant scarring (fibrosis) in the liver.
2. The FibroScan®: If your FIB-4 score suggests a closer look is needed, a FibroScan is recommended. This is a specialized, non-invasive scan—much like a standard ultrasound—that measure the "stiffness" of the liver. This allows us to accurately estimate the degree of scarring without the need for a needle biopsy.

## Is Liver biopsy needed?

In the past, a liver biopsy was the standard method for assessing liver health. Today, however, we can obtain all the necessary information for the vast majority of patients using a combination of specialized blood tests, ultrasounds, and FibroScan® technology.

These modern tools allow us to accurately monitor your liver without the need for an invasive procedure. A liver biopsy is now typically reserved for more complex cases—specifically when the underlying cause of the liver disease remains unclear or when we need highly detailed information that scans alone cannot provide.

## How is MASLD treated?

The most effective way to treat MASLD is by improving the "metabolic factors" that caused the fat to build up in the first place.

- **Weight loss:** You don't need to lose massive amounts of weight to see a difference. Losing 5% of your body weight starts to remove fat from the liver. Losing 10% can actually start to heal inflammation and reduce early scarring.
- **Better Fuel for your Body:** Focus on a "*Mediterranean*" style of eating—plenty of vegetables, healthy fats (like olive oil), and lean proteins. It is especially helpful to cut back on sugary drinks and highly processed snacks.
- **Stay Active:** Aim for about 150 minutes of activity a week (like brisk walking).
- **Limit Alcohol:** While this condition isn't caused by alcohol, drinking can make the damage happen faster. It is therefore best to avoid alcohol or keep it to a minimum.

## How is a Fibroscan different from a standard blood test?

While blood tests (LFTs) provide information regarding inflammation and protein synthesis, they cannot always show the physical state of the liver. A Fibroscan is a painless, non-invasive ultrasound-based test that directly measures liver stiffness (fibrosis) and fatty change (steatosis). It provides immediate results and often removes the need for a traditional liver biopsy.

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