

STEATOTIC (FATTY) LIVER DISEASE: AM I AT RISK?

WHAT IS FATTY LIVER DISEASE?

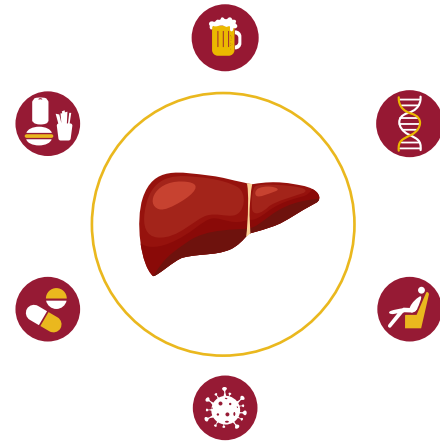
Fatty liver disease happens when too much fat builds up in the liver. Over time, this can cause inflammation, scarring, and damage that may lead to serious health problems.

Doctors now call it Steatotic Liver Disease, or SLD for short. There are a few types:

- **Metabolic dysfunction-associated steatotic liver disease (MASLD):** This is the most common type. It occurs in people with metabolic health problems such as:
 - Overweight or obesity
 - Type 2 diabetes or prediabetes
 - High blood pressure
 - High cholesterol or high triglycerides

You may also hear MAFLD (metabolic-associated fatty liver disease) in some countries.

- **Metabolic dysfunction-associated steatohepatitis (MASH):** This is a more serious type of MASLD where the liver is inflamed or scarred in addition to having too much fat.
- **Metabolic and alcohol-associated liver disease (MetALD):** This happens when someone has MASLD and also drinks more alcohol than is considered safe.



HOW COMMON IS SLD?

Unfortunately, it is very common. Experts estimate about 1 in 3 people around the world has MASLD. It is especially common in places like the U.S., South America, the Middle East, Asia, and Europe.

It is often not diagnosed because:

- **People do not know about it**
- **It may not cause symptoms early on**
- **It is difficult to screen for**
- **There are limited treatments**

WHO IS AT RISK?

You may be at higher risk if you have:



Obesity



Type 2 Diabetes



High Blood Pressure



High Cholesterol



Metabolic Syndrome

MetALD may also occur if you meet MASLD criteria and consume alcohol at moderate or higher levels. It's important to talk to your doctor about these factors.

Other risk factors include:

- Sleep apnea
- History of gestational diabetes
- Polycystic ovary syndrome (PCOS)
- Menopause
- Hypothyroidism
- Rapid weight loss or malnutrition



GENETIC RISK

Some people inherit genes that make them more likely to store fat in the liver or develop damage. Having a genetic risk does not mean you will definitely develop liver disease, but it may increase your chances, especially if combined with other risk factors. A family history of liver disease is important to share with your doctor.

COULD I HAVE MASLD OR MASH?

Many people with MASLD or MASH feel completely fine, especially in the early stages.

Possible symptoms include:

- *Ongoing fatigue that doesn't improve with rest*
- *Abdominal pain or discomfort*
- *Yellowing of the skin or eyes (jaundice)*
- *Itchy skin*
- *Dark urine*

In advanced cases, symptoms of cirrhosis may appear, such as swelling of the abdomen and bleeding tendencies.

HOW IS MASLD OR MASH DIAGNOSED?

Doctors may use a combination of:



Blood tests



Noninvasive imaging tests like ultrasound or MRI



A physical exam and questions about your health history



In some cases, a liver biopsy (taking a small piece of liver to test)

Normal liver blood tests do not always mean the liver is healthy, which is why risk-based screening is important.

WHAT HAPPENS IF I'M DIAGNOSED?

If MASLD or MASH is not addressed, liver damage can worsen over time.

The good news: early diagnosis makes a big difference. Many people can slow or stop disease progression by:

- 1 Eating a balanced, nutritious diet**
- 2 Being physically active**
- 3 Improving sleep**
- 4 Managing blood sugar, blood pressure, and cholesterol**
- 5 Losing weight if recommended by a healthcare provider**

There is now an FDA-approved medication in the U.S. and Europe, resmetirom, for certain people with MASH and liver scarring (fibrosis). Other treatments are being studied in clinical trials.

Talk with your healthcare provider about screening, lifestyle changes, and treatment options that may be right for you.