

What is it?

Healthy livers have very little or no fat in them. But if you drink too much alcohol, or eat too much food, your body deals with the excess calories by turning some of them into fat. This fat is then stored throughout your body, even within your liver cells. When the fat in liver cells builds up over time, it causes fatty liver disease. Fatty liver can increase the risk of developing:

- Liver scarring (cirrhosis)
- Diabetes
- High blood pressure
- Cardiovascular events such as heart attacks or stroke
- Some types of cancer

The good news is that fatty liver disease is reversible.

What will my GP do now?

Your GP may encourage you to:

- Lose weight and increase physical activity (avoid rapid weight loss as it can worsen liver damage)
- Avoid saturated fats, [simple carbohydrates](#), and sweetened drinks
- Keep your blood sugar levels within your target range
- Reduce any cardiovascular risks such as smoking, high blood pressure, high cholesterol
- Stop drinking alcohol

If you are overweight, your GP will recommend a weight management program. The goal is to lose weight gradually (around 0.25 to 0.5 kg per week) until you reach your ideal weight for your height and ethnicity.

Your GP may refer you to a dietician or to the Get Healthy Information and Coaching Service (see 'What supports are available?'). If your condition is more serious, your GP may refer you to a specialist for care and treatment.

What will my GP in future?

Your GP will want to see you every 6-12 months, depending on your risk of liver damage. They will continue to monitor your liver function (blood test) and weight. They may also check if you have any symptoms of liver problems, including:

- Nausea or vomiting, including vomiting blood
- Loss of appetite
- Abdominal swelling
- Easy bruising
- Spider-like veins in the skin
- Low energy or weakness
- Muscle loss
- Weight loss
- Confusion

What can I do?

- Follow any dietary changes recommended by your GP, dietician or health coach
- Get active; your GP may recommend certain types of regular activity to suit your circumstances
- Take your medication as prescribed
- Avoid drinking alcohol and smoking
- Have regular check-ups with your GP

Fatty liver disease

What supports are available?

The Get Healthy Information and Coaching Service

To help you meet your diet and exercise goals, your GP may refer you to the Get Healthy Information and Coaching Service. This is a free telephone-based support service that you can use for up to 6 months, all from the comfort of your own home. Phone **1300 806 258** or visit gethealthynsw.com.au



What questions could I ask my doctor?

- How can I improve my liver health?
- What medicine(s) do I need to take?
- What are the side effects of my medicine?
- What symptoms should I be concerned about?
- Am I at risk of any other complications?
- What foods should I avoid?



Where can I learn more?

- Gastroenterological Society of Australia (GESA) gesa.org.au
- Get Healthy Information and Coaching Service: gethealthynsw.com.au

This information is to be viewed by someone who has received a diagnosis from their doctor. It is not designed to be used to diagnose a condition or as a substitute for ongoing medical care

Health Resource Directory factsheets are endorsed by South Western Sydney PHN's Community Advisory Committee and local GPs

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