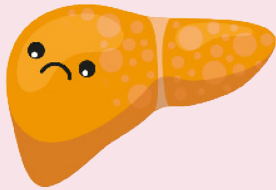
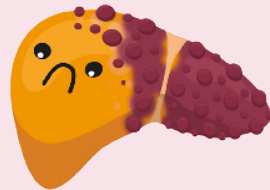


# Eating well for a healthy liver

Your diet could be damaging your liver – but you can do something about it. This factsheet is for people who want to learn more about how to eat to reduce their risk of preventable liver disease, or those who have been diagnosed with the early stages of non-alcohol related fatty liver disease.

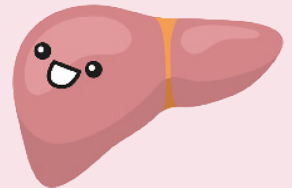


Non-alcohol related fatty liver disease is the biggest cause of liver disease worldwide, and is often referred to as the 'silent killer'. It's much more common than people realise – in fact, one in three people in the UK are estimated to have a bit of a fatty liver.



Fatty liver disease is linked to being overweight and eating an unhealthy diet, and can lead to serious liver disease if left unchecked. However, the good news is that your liver's amazing. Even if it's damaged, it can repair itself – if the damage hasn't gone too far...

Improving your diet can help to combat fatty liver disease



A healthy diet combined with regular exercise and sensible levels of alcohol consumption can help to reduce your risk of more serious liver disease. And if you're overweight, improving your diet to lose weight can reverse or control fatty liver disease.

## Eat a well-balanced diet

A well-balanced diet can help to reduce your risk of developing fatty liver disease. To eat healthily you need to get the right balance between different foods. For most people, a well-balanced diet is one that is low in fat, sugar and salt, and high in fibre (see [www.nhs.uk/live-well](http://www.nhs.uk/live-well) for more help with this). Your diet should also contain enough protein and a wide range of vitamins and minerals.

- Eat at least five portions of a variety of fruit and vegetables a day
- Base meals on potatoes, bread, rice, pasta or other starchy carbohydrates, choosing wholegrain versions where possible
- Include some dairy or dairy alternatives (such as soya drinks), choosing lower fat and lower sugar options
- Eat some beans, pulses, fish, eggs, meat and other proteins (including two portions of fish every week, one of which should be oily)
- Choose unsaturated oils and spreads and eat in small amounts.

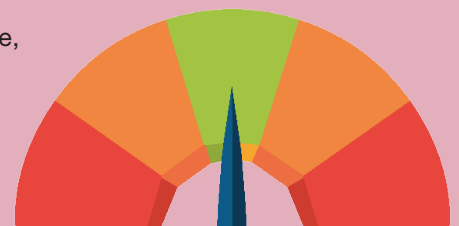
If you have been diagnosed with liver disease, these guidelines might vary, so always talk to your doctor or dietitian before making changes to your diet.

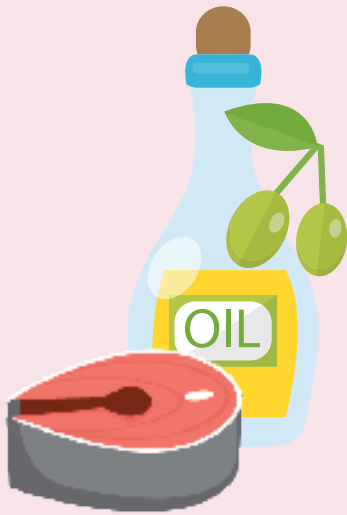


## Lose weight sensibly

If you are overweight and have a fatty liver, losing 5-10% of your body weight can control or reverse fatty liver disease. Aim to lose around 0.5-2lbs a week for sensible, sustainable weight loss. Don't 'crash diet' – there's no quick and easy way to lose weight and crash dieting can cause other health complications.

Regular lower calorie meals containing protein (such as lean meat, fish or beans), starchy carbohydrates (such as bread, potatoes or rice) and vitamins (in fruit and vegetables) are usually the best approach to reducing weight sensibly – combined with regular exercise.





## Try a taste of the Mediterranean

Research has shown that a Mediterranean-style diet can be particularly beneficial for people with fatty liver disease. A Mediterranean diet varies by country and region. However, it's usually high in vegetables, fruits, legumes, nuts, beans, cereals, grains, fish, and unsaturated fats such as olive oil. It typically includes a lower intake of meat and dairy foods.

You can make your diet more 'Mediterranean' by:

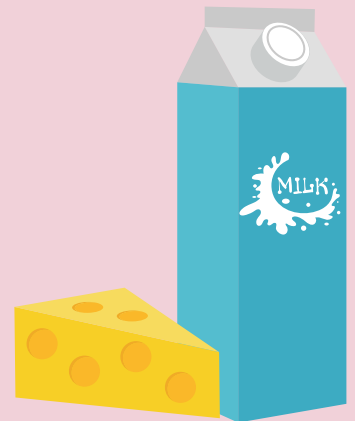
- **Choosing products made from vegetable and plant oils, such as olive oil, rapeseed oil, vegetable oil**
- **Eating plenty of fruit and vegetables**
- **Including fish in your diet – at least twice weekly, with one portion an oily fish**
- **Eating less meat**
- **Eating plenty of starchy foods, such as bread and pasta, but be mindful of portion size.**



## Cut down on refined sugars, saturated fats and hidden fats

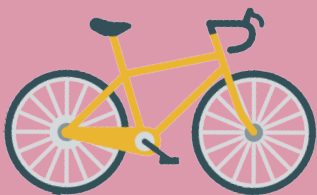
Keep refined sugars and saturated fats to a sensible level. If you want to cut down on the fat you eat, you need to avoid 'hidden' fats as well as the obvious ones you can see in meat and greasy foods.

Try using low-fat alternatives of dairy products such as butter, margarine or mayonnaise; opt for semi-skimmed or skimmed milk; choose lean meats; and swap sugary snacks for sweet fruit. Remember, too, that many processed foods and microwave meals are high in fat, so eat only small amounts or use a low-fat version.



## Keep alcohol to a sensible level

To look after your liver, keep your alcohol consumption to no more than 14 units a week, and have two-three consecutive alcohol-free days each week too. If you have been diagnosed with liver disease, your doctor may advise you not to drink at all.



## Take regular exercise

Regular exercise has so many benefits! Not only is it good for your liver, but it can reduce your risk of major illnesses, such as heart disease, stroke, type 2 diabetes and cancer by up to 50% and lower your risk of early death by up to 30%.

**The NHS recommends that adults aged 19-64 should aim for at least 150 mins moderate activity or 75 mins intense activity a week.**

**If you have been diagnosed with liver disease, always speak to your doctor before making any changes to your diet. They will be able to advise you on the safest way to lose weight, and may also refer you to a dietitian to help.**

Find more advice about healthy eating at [www.nhs.uk/live-well](http://www.nhs.uk/live-well)



[www.britishlivertrust.org.uk](http://www.britishlivertrust.org.uk)

**Helpline:** 0800 652 7330 **Email:** [info@britishlivertrust.org.uk](mailto:info@britishlivertrust.org.uk) **Online community:** [www.healthunlocked.com/britishlivertrust](http://www.healthunlocked.com/britishlivertrust)