

# DOES THIS LIFESTYLE MAKE MY LIVER LOOK FAT?

Lower the risk of non-alcoholic fatty liver disease naturally

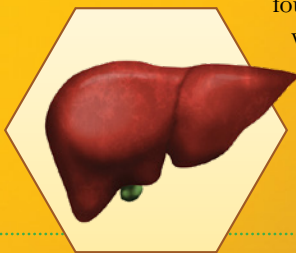
When you hear the term “fatty liver disease” you might envision someone who routinely tips back a few too many alcoholic beverages. While it’s true that heavy drinking can increase your odds of developing the disease, there are other, much more common causes of the condition. Are you at risk?

Non-alcoholic fatty liver disease (NAFLD) affects about 100 million people in the United States. It occurs when your liver has difficulty breaking down dietary fats, causing fat to build up in your liver tissue. NAFLD typically doesn’t cause any symptoms, and most people don’t know they have it until they get a blood test. But on occasion, some people do experience fatigue, pain in the upper right abdomen, and unexplained weight loss. These symptoms can be a sign that the accumulation of fat has triggered inflammation and scarring in the liver. At its most

severe, non-alcoholic fatty liver disease can progress to liver failure.

## HABITS FOR A HEALTHY LIVER

A wide range of health and environmental factors can increase your risk of NAFLD, including high cholesterol and triglyceride levels, metabolic syndrome, obesity, type 2 diabetes, gastric bypass surgery, rapid weight loss, and exposure to the chemicals in everyday products like processed food and personal care products. And even if you don’t indulge in alcohol, how you quench your thirst can set you up for this potentially devastating disease. Israeli researchers found that people with NAFLD often consume five times



as many carbohydrates from soft drinks as those without the disease. The more soft drinks the study participants downed, the more likely they were to have NAFLD.

The culprit responsible for these findings is sugar—especially one specific type of sugar called fructose. One study reported that the fructose in sweetened beverages and ultra-processed foods increased the amount of liver fat in study participants by 38 percent within just two weeks. Another study found that people who get 18 to 30 percent of their daily calories from high-fructose corn syrup (HFCS) experienced an increase in liver fat within 10 weeks.

Adopting liver-friendly habits can help lower your risk of NAFLD. Start by reducing your sugar intake—especially HFCS. Focus instead on adding fruits, vegetables, and healthy fats to your meals. Then add exercise. Recent studies suggest that adopting a regular exercise program may benefit the liver by reducing the risk of insulin resistance—a key promoter of NAFLD. Finally, attain and maintain a healthy weight. A new clinical trial of 697 people, which was published in the journal *Nutrients*, reported that those who lost weight through intermittent fasting significantly lowered their body mass index and distinctly decreased their risk of NAFLD.

## TARGETED NUTRIENTS

Supplements can also help lower your risk—or lead to improvement if you already suffer from the disease.

**Andrographis** may be known best for its cold-busting capabilities, but recent studies show that it's also a potent liver



protectant. Long used in both Ayurvedic and Traditional Chinese Medicine, this bitter-tasting herb is rich in compounds known as andrographolides which studies suggest provide antioxidant and anti-inflammatory support to the liver. In one study, a team of international researchers found that andrographis reduced inflammation and fibrosis in a serious form of NAFLD known as non-alcoholic steatohepatitis (NASH). But to get all the liver-loving benefits this herb has to offer, look for an andrographis supplement standardized to deliver a clinically studied 80 mg dose of andrographolide.



**Berberine** is a powerful antioxidant found in botanicals like barberry, goldenseal, and Oregon grape. Several preliminary studies show that berberine increases two of the body's own powerhouse antioxidants—superoxide dismutase (SOD) and glutathione (GHS). It also reduces triglyceride levels within the liver. One randomized clinical trial involving 184 patients with NAFLD found that supplementing with berberine in conjunction with lifestyle changes reduced fatty liver more than lifestyle factors alone. This compound also improved body weight and helped to normalize lipid profiles.

**Curcumin** is a potent antioxidant and anti-inflammatory compound proven to be extremely effective for treating numerous liver disorders. But its liver-loving benefits



don't stop there. Research reports that curcumin also modifies lipids, reduces inflammation, improves insulin sensitivity, and directly targets fat in liver cells. The problem is, most curcumin supplements are poorly absorbed by the body. To ensure you're getting the most bioavailable form, look for a curcumin supplement that is blended with turmeric essential oil containing ar-turmerone complex.

**Korean Red Ginseng** may be best known for its energizing properties, but it's also an effective weapon against NAFLD. Findings in the journal *Food Chemistry and Toxicology* show that red ginseng lowers serum triglycerides in the liver while boosting HDL (good) cholesterol and the activity of natural killer cells. These properties help lower the risk of NAFLD. But not just any red ginseng will yield these benefits. Maximize these liver-protective properties by seeking out a proprietary form of Korean red ginseng known as HRG80. This hydroponically cultivated ginseng delivers a concentrated and bioavailable source of rare, noble ginsenosides.



Because NAFLD can often fly under the radar, it's smart to ask your doctor for a blood test to check your liver function. Since there aren't any drugs that have been developed to treat the condition, adopting these lifestyle and supplement strategies can not only help treat NAFLD, they may work to keep it at bay. ■