

MASLD: Frequently asked questions (FAQs)

MASLD (Metabolic dysfunction-associated steatotic liver disease), NAFLD and fatty liver disease are different names for the same condition.

I've been diagnosed with MASLD but I've had no symptoms. Is that normal?

Yes, this is very common. Most people with MASLD don't have any symptoms in the early stages. Many people only find out they have it during health checks or tests for another health problem. Some people have MASLD for years without noticing any signs. Symptoms usually only appear after the liver has already been damaged.

I thought I had a healthy lifestyle and I'm not obese. Why do I have MASLD?

MASLD is often linked with being overweight or obese, but you can still develop it if your body mass index (BMI) is in the healthy range. This means that someone can have a healthy BMI but still carry extra fat around their waist and internal organs. This type of fat can increase the risk of MASLD, heart disease and other metabolic conditions.

MASLD is also linked to some other medical conditions. Things like genes, the environment and hormones can also play a part.

Other factors can also affect how fat builds up in the liver, including:

- your genes
- your environment
- your lifestyle
- your hormones
- your ethnic background
- your age
- your sex
- other health conditions
- medicines for other conditions

What we eat and how active we are plays a big part in how much fat ends up in the liver. Even if you feel that you already lead a healthy lifestyle, it may be helpful to take a closer look at your eating habits and activity levels. Small changes can sometimes make a big difference.



Liver UK is the new name
for the British Liver Trust
and Children's Liver
Disease Foundation

www.liveruk.org
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Registered Charity England and
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I can't get support through my GP to help with weight, diet, or exercise.

What can I do?

This can feel frustrating, especially when you're trying to make changes. But there are lots of other support options available. You could try:

- local exercise groups or community activities
- free online programmes or apps
- activities you can do at home

Start small and build up gradually. Small changes can make a big difference over time. Find ideas and support:

Sport England: **sportengland.org/get-moving**

NHS Better Health: **nhs.uk/better-health**

This Girl Can: **thisgirlcan.co.uk**

I struggle to get active? What can I do?

Getting active can be hard, especially if you're dealing with fatigue, health conditions, or side effects from medication. The key is to start small, be kind to yourself, and build up gradually in a way that works for you. You could:

- start with small, gentle activities
- choose low-impact options (like walking or stretching)
- be active at times of the day when you feel better
- break activity into short sessions

Find ideas and support:

We Are Undeatable: **weareundefeatable.co.uk**

Every Body Moves: **everybodymoves.org.uk**

How quickly does MASLD get worse? And how quickly can it improve?

This varies a lot from person to person.

- For many people, MASLD progresses slowly over years or even decades
- For others, it may progress more quickly

The good news is that lifestyle changes can often stop MASLD getting worse. They may even improve your liver health. How quickly you see improvements will depend on your individual situation. Your doctor can give more personalised advice.

I've been diagnosed with advanced liver scarring (fibrosis).

What does this mean?

If you are diagnosed with stage 3 or stage 4 liver fibrosis, it means there is more scarring (fibrosis) in your liver. This can increase the risk of serious problems, such as cirrhosis, liver failure or liver cancer. At this stage, you may hear the term **metabolic dysfunction-associated steatohepatitis (MASH)**. This was previously called non-alcohol related steatohepatitis (NASH). This is simply another way that doctors may refer to more advanced liver scarring.

If your MASLD has reached a later stage, you may be referred to hospital for further treatment or monitoring. Your healthcare team will talk to you about steps you can take to support your health. This may include eating a healthy, balanced diet, staying physically active, and keeping a healthy weight. For some people, these changes can help slow down or even improve liver damage. Because the scarring has become more advanced, you may need additional treatment or monitoring to reduce the risk of complications.

Why aren't there medicines for MASLD yet?

Currently, there are no specific medicines available in the UK to treat MASLD. But they may be available in the near future. Although there are no medicines specifically for MASLD, your doctor may recommend treatments for related conditions, such as:

- type 2 diabetes
- obesity
- high blood pressure
- high cholesterol

**Visit our website for
information on the latest
treatments**

Treating these conditions is important because they can impact your overall health, particularly the risk of heart attack or stroke.

Are weight loss medicines a treatment for MASLD?

Medicines like GLP-1 treatments are not currently approved for MASLD. In the UK, they are only approved for:

- type 2 diabetes, and/or
- obesity.

Research shows they can reduce liver fat, inflammation and fibrosis. A GLP-1 medicine called Semaglutide is currently being reviewed by NICE. This is the organisation that decides which medicines can be used in the NHS. This means it may become available for MASLD patients in the UK in the near future.

What supplements can help my liver?

There are no supplements that have been proven to treat MASLD or improve liver health. Some supplements can actually harm your liver, especially if you already have liver disease. Always check with your doctor before taking any supplements, medicines or treatments they haven't prescribed.

Can I drink alcohol if I have MASLD?

If you have MASLD, drinking too much can make your liver damage worse. To help protect your liver, try to cut down on alcohol or avoid drinking if you can. Do not exceed the national low-risk drinking guidelines:

- Do not drink more than 14 units of alcohol a week
- Spread your drinking out over 3 or more days
- Have 2 to 3 alcohol-free days a week, preferably in a row

If you have fibrosis stage 3 (advanced fibrosis) or fibrosis stage 4 (cirrhosis), it's very important to stop drinking alcohol completely.

Do I need to stop smoking?

Stopping smoking is one of the best things you can do for your health. If you have MASLD, it's even more important. Smoking can:

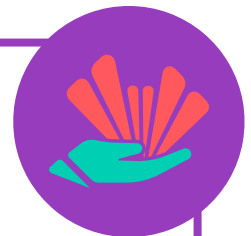
- make liver disease get worse (progress) more quickly
- increase your risk of cardiovascular disease
- increase your risk of liver cancer

Quitting can be hard, especially if you've smoked for many years. But support is available to help you stop.

How we can help

The Liver UK support team are here for you and for your family and friends. Find out more more at **liveruk.org/support**

Call our nurse-led helpline to talk to one of our team: **0800 652 7330**



Find out more, including where to get support at: **liveruk.org/masld** or scan the QR code.

