

MS Essentials Tips



LIVER HEALTH AND MULTIPLE SCLEROSIS

It is estimated that 20-30% of adults have fatty liver due to poor diet, lack of exercise and excessive alcohol consumption. People who are obese or have Type 2 diabetes have a higher risk of developing fatty liver.

Medications – including non-prescription drugs (e.g. acetaminophen) as well as some of your MS medications – can also cause damage to the liver. This may impair your body's ability to break down the foods and medications you need. The liver has a remarkable ability to heal itself so liver damage can be reversed. But you can take a few simple steps to promote and maintain your liver health.

6 Steps to better liver health

- 1 Reduce your consumption of alcohol.** It's best to abstain from alcohol altogether if your doctor has told you that you have fatty liver or signs of liver damage.
- 2 Adopt a healthy, balanced diet** such as a Mediterranean diet. Reduce problem foods, such as refined sugar and saturated fats.
- 3 Increase your daily activity.** Regular exercise is important to maintain a healthy body weight and will have beneficial effects on your MS symptoms as well.
- 4 Monitor your cholesterol.** Your family doctor can order a blood test to check your cholesterol. High cholesterol levels can be lowered with medications.
- 5 Get the blood tests your doctor orders.** If you're taking a medication for your MS, it's important that you have your blood tested regularly.
- 6 Consider getting vaccinated against hepatitis.** Some viruses (called hepatitis A, B, C, D and E) attack the liver and cause inflammation and damage. Ask your doctor about getting vaccinated against hepatitis A and B. Some fees may apply so check with your insurer about your coverage.

Healthy choices for your liver

- Plant-based foods
 - Whole grains, e.g. multigrain breads, brown rice, oats, whole-grain pasta, cornmeal and bulgur
 - Green, leafy vegetables, e.g. lettuce, spinach
 - Cruciferous vegetables, e.g. broccoli, brussels sprouts, cabbage, cauliflower, bok choy
 - Soy products, e.g. tofu
 - Legumes, e.g. peas, chickpeas, lentils
 - Fruits high in vitamin C, e.g. grapefruit, lemons, oranges. Grapefruit can interact with various medications so ask your pharmacist for advice.
- Low-fat dairy products, e.g. skim milk, low-fat cheese, fat-free yogurt
- Low-fat meats, e.g. chicken, turkey, pork, seafood. Remove all visible fat and skin before eating.
- Unsaturated fats and oils, e.g. olive oil, vegetable oil, peanut oil, fish oil

Consider vitamin and mineral supplements, e.g. vitamin C, vitamin D, vitamin E, magnesium or take a multivitamin daily.