

# Fatty Liver

The liver metabolizes food and medicines, and some (but not all) things we take in can harm the liver. If your liver is showing signs of problems, it is best to avoid Tylenol (acetaminophen) and alcohol, and reduce fat, fried foods, fast foods, processed foods, and simple sugars (white flour, sweets). Avoid saturated and trans-fats and use olive, peanut, or canola for cooking.

It's amazing how fast food can affect the liver. In the documentary *Supersize Me*, the director eats nothing but fast food for a month, and within weeks his liver enzymes are elevated (in a similar film, the director went on a vegetarian diet and saw the reverse occur).

Losing weight addresses the conditions that contribute to nonalcoholic fatty liver disease. Ideally, a loss of 10 percent of body weight is desirable, but improvement in risk factors can become apparent if you lose even three to five percent of your starting weight.

Your doctor may recommend that you receive vaccinations against hepatitis A and hepatitis B to help protect you from viruses that may cause further liver damage.

## Vitamin E

Antioxidants like vitamin E may protect the liver by reducing inflammation. Some evidence suggests vitamin E (600-800 IU daily) may be helpful for people with liver damage caused by nonalcoholic fatty liver disease. But vitamin E has been linked with increased risk of heart disease and, in men, an increased risk of prostate cancer. We don't recommend starting vitamin E without talking to your primary care doctor first.

## Coffee

In studies of people with nonalcoholic fatty liver disease, those who drank coffee had less liver damage than those who drank little or no coffee.

Coffee is indeed a two-edged sword, so discuss its risks and benefits with your doctor. For mental health, avoid caffeine after 2 p.m. Use coffee in moderation. Around 1.5 metric cups of coffee a day reduced the risk of depression, but greater amounts increased it.

## Probiotics for Fatty Liver

Probiotics may be helpful for fatty liver ([Alisi, 2014](#)). The strain used in a study for fatty liver was called VSL#3. Similar results were found with probiotic-enriched yogurt (containing *Lactobacillus acidophilus* La5 and *Bifidobacterium lactis* Bb12 strains) and another liver study used the Symbiter brand. In a survey of gastrointestinal doctors the most recommended probiotic for overall gut-health was *Align*.

Probiotics also help anxiety by reducing inflammation through the mind-gut. The type used for anxiety are available in the *Mood Probiotic* and *ProbioSerene* brands (on Amazon).

## Omega-3 for Fatty Liver

Omega-3 fatty acids (fish oil) improve mental health conditions including depression, irritability, bipolar disorder, memory and ADHD. A few studies show benefits in liver health as well, including fatty liver disease ([Pacifico, 2015](#); [Boyraz 2015](#)). These supplements are found in dietary sources such as salmon, fish, nuts, and green-leafy vegetables. You can learn more about how find good over-the-counter omega-3's at:

[chrisaikenmd.com/supplements](http://chrisaikenmd.com/supplements)

—Chris Aiken, MD, updated 7/1/2025