

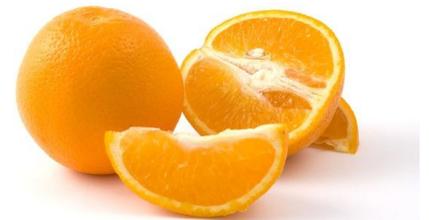


# Liver Disease & Nutrition

The liver serves many purposes in the body, including filtering harmful substances from the blood, producing substances that assist with food digestion, and helping to change food into energy.

There are many kinds of **liver diseases**, such as:

- **Cirrhosis:** Scarring and hardening of the liver
- **Fatty Liver Disease:** Build-up of fat in liver cells
- **Bile Duct Disease:** Bile is a liquid made in the liver that helps break down fats in the small intestine. Bile duct disease keeps bile from flowing into the small intestine where it is utilized.
- **Hepatitis (A), (B) and (C):** Disease of the liver caused by the hepatitis A, B, or C virus
- **Hemochromatosis:** Build up of iron in the liver (inherited disease)
- Others can be the result of drugs, poisons, or drinking too much alcohol



Some of the effects of liver disease include weight changes, loss of muscle mass, ascites and/or edema (fluid retention), jaundice (yellowing of the skin and eyes), dark urine and/or light-colored stools, fatigue or loss of stamina, nausea, vomiting, anorexia, altered taste perception, and/or signs/symptoms of vitamin and mineral deficiency.

Depending on the diagnosis, alterations in calorie, protein, fluid, fat, vitamins or minerals may be recommended. For most liver diseases, a **healthy diet** will make it easier for the liver to function and may help repair some liver damage.

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### In general, it is important to:

- Limit high sodium foods
- Avoid foods that may cause foodborne illness such as:
  - Unpasteurized milk products
  - Raw or undercooked meat, poultry, fish, seafood, and eggs
  - Unwashed fresh fruits and vegetables
- Eat enough food to obtain adequate calories, vitamins, and minerals.

### How can these changes be made?

- It may be easier to eat several small meals throughout the day (4-6) as opposed to a few large ones.
- Look for no-sodium or low-sodium versions of foods you like to eat, such as crackers, cheese, canned vegetables, or soups.
- Avoid overly processed foods, as these tend to be higher in sodium.
- Use herbs, spices, vinegar, oils, juice, or herb mixes (e.g., Mrs. Dash) to flavor food instead of salt.
- Between meals, enjoy healthy snacks, such as:
  - Fruits and vegetables with dip, whole milk, yogurt, cereal, bagels, roasted nuts, and peanut butter.



Check with a dietitian or doctor for your specific dietary needs.

*Additional Notes:*