

Medications Frequently Used to Prevent or Treat Liver Disease**✓ Fat buildup in the liver**

- ☐ Fat buildup in the liver can lead to metabolic dysfunction-associated steatohepatitis (MASH).
- ☐ Two medications have been FDA-approved to treat MASH. Both medications are approved for individuals with MASH who have moderate to advanced liver scarring. Neither medication is approved to treat cirrhosis.
- ☐ Resmetirom (Rezdiffra™) is a pill that was approved by the FDA in March 2024.
- ☐ Semaglutide (Wegovy®) is an injection that was approved by the FDA in August 2025.

✓ Fluid retention

- ☐ Fluid retention is one of the first symptoms of liver scarring.
- ☐ Diuretics reduce fluid retention. They do this by increasing urine output. The correct dose eliminates fluid without causing dehydration or kidney injury.
- ☐ Individuals who take diuretics should maintain a low-salt diet, monitor weight and swelling daily, and get a blood test called a basic metabolic panel every few weeks until safety is established. Let your healthcare provider know if you are getting too thirsty.
- ☐ Diuretics include spironolactone, hydrochlorothiazide, furosemide, and bumetanide.

✓ Portal hypertension

- ☐ Portal hypertension occurs when scar tissue in the liver disrupts blood flow coming into the liver, causing high blood pressure in the portal vein.
- ☐ Non-selective beta blockers (NSBBs) treat portal hypertension by lowering pressure in the portal vein. This decreases the chance of gastrointestinal bleeding from liver disease.
- ☐ NSBBs can also lower blood pressure, sometimes too much. Individuals who take NSBBs need to monitor their blood pressure to make sure it is not too low.
- ☐ NSBBs include carvedilol and propranolol.

Treating Major Complications of Liver Disease**✓ Encephalopathy**

- ☐ Hepatic encephalopathy happens when the liver does not adequately clear toxins from the blood. These toxins can travel to the brain and cause symptoms that range from sleepiness to severe confusion or coma.
- ☐ Lactulose is a medication that is usually given as an oral syrup. It helps the body get rid of toxins by causing frequent diarrhea. Lactulose also reduces the amount of ammonia produced by the gut. Ammonia is one of the toxins that causes hepatic encephalopathy.
- ☐ Rifaximin is another medication that helps treat encephalopathy. This antibiotic changes the bacteria in the gut, and is sometimes used with lactulose.

✓ Ascites and peritonitis

- ☐ Ascites is fluid buildup in the abdomen. When ascites cannot be controlled with diuretics, bacteria in the fluid can lead to an infection called peritonitis.
- ☐ Peritonitis can rapidly become life-threatening, so it is important to prevent peritonitis.
- ☐ Routine use of antibiotics like ciprofloxacin can prevent peritonitis.
- ☐ Acute cases of peritonitis are treated with broad-spectrum antibiotics and intravenous fluids.

Coming Soon: Medications Specifically for Alphas

- ✓ Currently, there are no treatments specifically for liver disease due to alpha-1 antitrypsin deficiency.
- ✓ Several promising therapies are in the pipeline. Clinical trials are ongoing for these therapies.
- ✓ Information on currently-enrolling Alpha-1 clinical trials is available at clinicaltrials.gov.

Additional Resources

- ✓ AlphaNet's Big Fat Reference Guide (BFRG) has a large section devoted to liver health. Chapter 17 of the BFRG focuses on medications for liver disease. Anyone can access [AlphaNet's BFRG](#). AlphaNet Subscribers can access the BFRG through their [Subscriber Portal](#).
- ✓ AlphaNet has created several 1-page documents that focus on liver health, which are available [here](#).