

Alphas and Liver Risk

- ✓ Alphas can get liver disease even without identifiable risk factors.
- ✓ Alphas are more affected than other individuals by risk factors that can cause liver damage.
- ✓ There are many things you can do to minimize your exposure to liver disease risks.
- ✓ The information below can help you prevent liver disease or slow its progression by taking concrete actions that minimize your exposure to risk factors.

Risk Factors You Can Minimize or Manage

- ✓ **Obesity and metabolic syndrome**
 - ❑ Obesity is a key risk factor for liver disease. Fat can be deposited in the liver and lead to inflammation and scarring.
 - ❑ Metabolic syndrome, which is associated with obesity, is the most common cause of liver disease in the United States.
 - ❑ Metabolic syndrome increases the risk of metabolic dysfunction-associated steatotic liver disease (MASLD) and metabolic dysfunction-associated steatohepatitis (MASH).
 - ❑ More information about metabolic health is available [here](#).
- ✓ **Viral hepatitis**
 - ❑ Viral hepatitis is inflammation of the liver that is caused by a virus.
 - ❑ The most common types of viral hepatitis are hepatitis A, hepatitis B, and hepatitis C.
- ✓ **Alcohol**
 - ❑ Alcohol deposits fat in the liver and can cause inflammation and scarring of the liver.
 - ❑ Heavy drinking is a leading cause of liver damage.
 - ❑ The American Liver Foundation defines excessive alcohol consumption as any amount greater than 2 drinks per day in men and 1 drink per day in women.
- ✓ **Acetaminophen and non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (NSAIDs)**
 - ❑ Acetaminophen (Tylenol®) can cause liver damage.
 - ❑ Some data suggest that NSAIDs like ibuprofen cause worse liver injury than acetaminophen.
 - ❑ If you take these medications as prescribed, it's usually safe. If you exceed the recommended dose all at once or over a period of time, they can damage your liver.
 - ❑ These medications are even more toxic if you regularly have more than 2 drinks per day.
- ✓ **Other liver toxins**
 - ❑ Liver damage can also be caused by dietary supplements, over-the-counter and prescription medications, smoking, illegal drugs, and exposure to toxic chemicals at work.

Action Steps to Promote Liver Health

- ✓ Maintain a healthy weight. Good nutrition and physical activity are important.
- ✓ Work with your healthcare provider to learn whether you have metabolic syndrome, which is preventable and reversible. More information about metabolic syndrome is available [here](#).
- ✓ All Alphas should be tested for viral hepatitis, including hepatitis A, B, and C. There are vaccines to prevent infection from hepatitis A and B. Alphas should be vaccinated if they do not have immunity.
- ✓ There is no vaccine for hepatitis C, but medication can cure it in most cases. All adults aged 18 and older and all pregnant women during every pregnancy should be tested for hepatitis C at least once.
- ✓ Consume alcohol in moderation, if at all. Most liver specialists would recommend no alcohol or at least very minimal intake for any Alpha, regardless of whether there is evidence of liver damage.
- ✓ Be careful with use of acetaminophen and NSAIDs. If you have portal hypertension, you should avoid acetaminophen and NSAIDs such as ibuprofen and naproxen.
- ✓ Minimize your exposure to other liver toxins. Work with your healthcare providers to clarify whether supplements, medications, and other exposures could be affecting your liver health.

Additional Resources

- ✓ AlphaNet's Big Fat Reference Guide (BFRG) has a large section devoted to liver health. 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](#).