

Liver Disease

You have been referred to the dietetic department for dietary advice for liver disease. We have posted resources to help you self-manage your condition.

For **general information** the British Liver Trust is a reliable source of information, information can be found on: <https://britishlivertrust.org.uk/information-and-support/>

If you are a **healthy weight** and weight stable it is advisable to maintain this weight with a healthy diet and exercise. A healthy balanced diet includes lots of fresh vegetables, fruit, and wholegrain carbohydrates and lean protein, such as chicken. Cut down on processed foods and snacks that are high in fat and sugar. Aim for 150 minutes per week of exercise (30 mins five days a week, for example) of moderate-to-intense activity every week, such as running, cycling or brisk walking.

If you are **overweight** and have not been losing weight unintentionally then it is recommended that you lose weight, again with a healthy balanced diet and exercise as above.

If you are **underweight** or **losing weight unintentionally** please see the advice below:

It is very important that you get enough energy and protein as your liver will be using this to repair itself. Aim to eat every 2-3 hours and avoid drinking large amounts of fluid before mealtimes.

Main Meals/Light Meals ideas:

- Leek and potato omelette
- Pasta in tomato sauce/purée with vegetables
- Pasta with tuna and sweetcorn
- Vegetable and lentil bake
- Risotto
- Scrambled egg on toast
- Beans (reduced salt) and toast
- Homemade lentil and vegetable soup.

Serve main meals with fortified mashed, boiled or roast potatoes. Try oven chips, rice, noodles or pasta as alternatives. Fortifying foods adds more calories in. Here are some examples of how to fortify your diet:

- Spread unsalted butter or margarine generously on bread and chapatti; also add to potatoes/vegetables
- Add mayonnaise or salad dressings to sandwiches, salad, pasta and potatoes
- Add cream to soups, sauces, desserts and cereals
- Use jam, honey, marmalade, syrup or chocolate spread with toast, pancakes and crumpets
- Sugar can be added to drinks, cereals and puddings
- Add grated cheese to sauces, soups, potatoes, vegetables and pasta
- Add milk powder to soups, mashed potato, sauces, milk pudding and custard
- Make jelly and casserole mixes with milk rather than water.

By eating small and often you can usually consume more energy. Therefore you could try to snack between meals. Snack examples include:

- Bakery foods: toasted crumpets, pancakes or teacakes with unsalted butter or margarine, fruitcake, malt loaf, pain au chocolate, cinnamon swirl, Vanilla Crème Crown, doughnut, scone with jam

- Crackers/crispbreads: Ruskusen's Matzo Crackers, Nairn's Rough Oatcakes
- Flapjacks: Tesco mini flapjack bites, Morrison's chocolate topped flapjack, Asda seed stacked yoghurt topped flapjack
- Puddings/desserts: custard pots, rice pudding, full fat yoghurts
- Crisps/popcorn: Butterkist sweet popcorn, Asda Extra Special popcorn cluster – strawberry white chocolate, Walkers Salt and Shake potato crisps (without the salt sachet added).

When you have liver problems it is important you have a bedtime snack to prevent your muscle breaking down. Aim to have a snack with 50g of carbohydrates, for example:

- An instant hot chocolate or malted drink with a crumpet or pancake or teacake
- Two slices of toast with jam or unsalted butter and a glass of milk
- Large chocolate muffin and a hot drink
- A flapjack
- Two slices of tiger loaf bread with (no added salt) butter
- Malted drink and 3 biscuits such as Hobnobs or ginger nuts
- A large croissant or cookie and some orange juice
- A bowl of cereal such as granola, porridge, cornflakes or 2 x Weetabix with either a banana or a glass of milk.

Full fat milk is very nutritious, high in calories and protein. Try to have one pint of milk daily. Milk can be fortified by adding 4 tablespoons of dried milk powder to a little milk and mix to a smooth paste. Add one pint of full cream to this and stir well. You can also try milkshakes, chocolate drinks made with full cream milk or milky coffee. You could make your own milkshake with full cream milk, ice cream and tinned/fresh fruit.

If you are struggling with the diet you may need nourishing drinks containing lots of protein and calories. Examples include Build-Up, Meritene and Complan which you can purchase from a supermarket or chemist. There are various supplements available on prescription in liquid and powder form which can help if you continue to lose weight. Your Dietitian will advise you if these are required.

If you have **ascites** (a build-up of fluid in your abdomen/tummy) you will need to limit your salt intake. Salt can cause your body to absorb and retain water therefore it is important to restrict the amount of salt in your diet. Avoid adding salt when cooking foods. Avoid stock cubes, processed meats e.g. bacon and salted snacks e.g. crisps. For ready meals and sandwiches - try to choose meals with less than 1.25g of salt per meal. For individual foods - such as soups and sauces - try to choose foods with under 0.75g salt per serving. Use black pepper, fresh herbs, spices, garlic, ginger, chilli and lime to flavour food instead.

If you have any concerns that are not covered within these resources please contact the British Liver Trust. For general enquires please call 01425 481320 Monday to Friday 9am to 5pm. For liver related questions please call the nurse-led helpline on 0800 652 7330 Monday to Friday (not bank holidays between 10am and 3pm)

As you are aware the NHS is currently under immense pressure due to the current COVID 19 pandemic. During this period we are not able to provide our usual service as we need to prioritise to reduce the risk to our patients. In view of this, we unfortunately are unable to offer you an appointment in our gastroenterology clinic. Should the national position change we will be able to resume our service as normal and you can self-refer back into our service.

Thanks in advance for your understanding.