



# Fatty Liver (MASLD)

The most common — and most overlooked — liver condition

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PATIENT GUIDE

Dr Reguram Sandrasegaram • Young Street Medical & Dental Centre


**Common, usually quiet — and worth taking seriously.**  
Fatty liver means extra fat is being stored in your liver. It's now called MASLD — and for most people, the bigger story isn't their liver. It's what it says about their heart and metabolism.


 **1 in 4**  
Australian adults have some degree of fatty liver

 **5–10%**  
weight loss can reverse it — sometimes fully

 **#1 risk**  
is to your heart, not your liver

## Why fatty liver matters


 **It's usually silent**  
Most people feel completely fine — it's often found by accident on a scan or blood test.

 **It's really common**  
Roughly one in four Australian adults, and far more if you have diabetes or carry extra weight around the middle.

 **Heart, not just liver**  
Most people with fatty liver are at higher risk of heart attack and stroke — that's the bigger conversation.

 **It can quietly progress**  
In some people, fat leads to inflammation (MASH), then scarring. Most never get this far — but it's why we check.

 **It often comes with company**  
Type 2 diabetes, high blood pressure, high cholesterol and a fuller waistline tend to travel together.

 **It can get better**  
Liver fat starts dropping within weeks of healthy changes — and even scarring can improve with enough weight loss.

**MASLD — the new name for fatty liver**  
The name changed in 2023 from NAFLD to MASLD — standing for 'metabolic-associated steatotic liver disease'. It's a more accurate, less stigmatising name. You may still hear 'fatty liver' — they mean the same thing.



# Help Your Liver Heal

What actually shifts fatty liver — and when to come back

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## Six changes that genuinely help



### Aim for 5–10% weight loss

Just 5% reduces liver fat; 7% reduces inflammation; 10% can reverse early scarring — you don't need to be perfect, just steady.



### Mediterranean-style eating

Lots of veg, olive oil, fish and nuts; fewer refined carbs and ultra-processed foods. The single best-studied diet for fatty liver.



### Cut sugary drinks

Soft drinks, juice and energy drinks go straight to liver fat. This one swap moves the needle quickly.



### Move 30 minutes, most days

A mix of walking, cycling or swimming with some resistance work twice a week — it lowers liver fat even before the scale shifts.



### Coffee — a quiet win

2–3 cups of coffee a day (caffeinated or not) is linked to less liver scarring — one of the few habits with consistent evidence.



### Go easy on alcohol

Even 'social' drinking pushes fatty liver along. Less is better — and breaks of several days a week help your liver recover.



### See your doctor sooner if:

- Yellowing of the skin or eyes, or itchy skin
- Swelling in your tummy, ankles or legs
- Easy bruising, or vomiting blood
- Confusion, or feeling unusually drowsy
- Unexplained weight loss or persistent tummy pain



### Working with your GP:

- ✓ A simple blood test (FIB-4) checks your scarring risk
- ✓ Some patients have a FibroScan — a quick liver scan
- ✓ Keep diabetes, blood pressure & cholesterol on track
- ✓ Tell us about any medicines or supplements
- ✓ Recheck in 6–12 months to see your progress

## A warning shot — and a real chance

Your liver is a forgiving organ. Small, steady changes turn this around.

*Fatty liver is really a cardiometabolic story — fix the metabolism, and the liver follows. — Dr Regu*