

# Healthy Eating Guidelines with Non-Alcoholic Fatty Liver Disease

What is Non-Alcoholic Fatty Liver Disease (NAFLD)?

NAFLD is a condition when fat is deposited in your liver even if you drink little or no alcohol. Having too much fat in your liver can lead to permanent liver damage.

Being overweight, having diabetes or high triglycerides (a type of fat in the blood), can put you at higher risk of developing NAFLD. Achieving a healthy body weight, following a healthy diet and being active can help you manage your NAFLD and reduce the amount of fat in your liver.



## Steps you can take

1. Aim for a healthy weight, if you are overweight:
  - | Try for a slow, gradual weight loss of 0.5-1 kilogram (1-2 pounds) per week.
  - | Talk to a Registered Dietitian to help you plan a step-by-step approach to weight loss.
2. Follow a healthy diet.
  - | Use [Canada's Food Guide](#) to help you plan a healthy diet. It will provide advice about the type and amounts of foods that you need each day.
  - | Include small amounts of healthy plant-based fats in your diet. These include foods such as:
    - | Vegetable oils such as canola oil, olive oil, peanut, safflower
    - | Avocado
    - | Soft, non-hydrogenated margarine
    - | Nuts and seeds
  - | Choose foods rich in omega-3 such as fish, ground flax seed, canola, walnuts and soy more often.

- | Limit foods that contain saturated or hydrogenated fats.
  - | Choose lean cuts of meat, skinless poultry, fish and low-fat dairy products.
  - | Limit processed meat, like hot dogs, bologna, salami and bacon.
  - | Choose vegetarian sources of proteins such as tofu, dried beans (black, white, kidney), peas (black eyed, chick, split), lentils more often.
  - | Limit store baked goods, cookies, crackers or frozen prepared foods.
- | Make lower fat food choices.
  - | Bake, broil, grill, poach, roast and barbeque foods with little added fat.
  - | Check the Nutrition Facts table on food packaging. A product is “low fat” if it contains less than 3 grams of fat per serving.
  - | Choose lower fat milk and milk alternatives.
    - Drink skim, 1% or 2% milk or soy beverage.
    - Eat yogurt made with 2% milk fat (M.F.) or less.
    - Eat cheese with 20% milk fat or less.
  - | Prepare healthy meals at home more often and limit your intake of take-out and restaurant foods.
- | Choose whole grains or foods high in fibre at least half of the time. Good choices include:
  - | Breakfast cereals with more than 3 grams of fibre per serving.
  - | Whole grains such as barley, brown rice and quinoa.
  - | Whole wheat or whole grain pastas and breads.
  - | Legumes (dried beans, peas and lentils).
- | Include vegetables and fruit at each meal or snack.
  - | Aim for 7-10 servings per day.
  - | Choose fresh, frozen or canned with little or no added sugar, salt or fat.
  - | Choose whole fruit more often than juice.
  - | Eat at least one dark green and one orange vegetable each day.

- | Limit your foods high in added sugar.
  - | Avoid sweetened beverages such as sodas or pop, fruit drinks, specialty coffees and teas.
  - | Choose water, unsweetened coffee or black or herbal tea instead.
  - | Limit your intake candy, cookies, pastries and other sweets.
  - | Choose fresh fruit, low fat yogurt, whole grain, low fat crackers or plain popcorn instead.
- | Use the Glycemic Index to choose healthier foods.
  - | The “Glycemic index” (GI) is a measure of how food raises your blood glucose levels.
  - | Low and medium GI foods don’t raise your blood glucose as much as high GI foods because they are digested slower.
  - | They may help you feel fuller longer and control your blood glucose levels.
  - | For more information on the glycemic index and how to choose lower GI foods see Additional Resources.
- 3. Exercise regularly.
  - | Aim for at least 30 minutes of moderate physical activity like walking and bicycling most days of the week.
  - | Check with your doctor before you start a new exercise program.
- 4. Manage your diabetes.
  - | If you have diabetes, work with your doctor and diabetes team to keep your blood glucose (sugar) levels under control.
- 5. Protect your liver.
  - | Avoid alcohol. Drinking alcohol may further stress and damage your liver.
  - | Talk to your doctor before you take any vitamin, mineral or herbal supplements. Some of these may cause liver damage.



## Additional Resources

- 1 The Glycemic Index [\\_https://guidelines.diabetes.ca/docs/patient-resources/glycemic-index-food-guide.pdf](https://guidelines.diabetes.ca/docs/patient-resources/glycemic-index-food-guide.pdf)
- 1 Lifestyle Steps for Healthy Weight Loss: Getting Started:  
[www.pennutrition.com/viewhandout.aspx?Portal=UbY=&id=JMfrXwQ=&PreviewHandout=bA==](http://www.pennutrition.com/viewhandout.aspx?Portal=UbY=&id=JMfrXwQ=&PreviewHandout=bA==)

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## Notes

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