

FATTY LIVER: How to get rid of it?



Non-alcoholic fatty liver disease (NAFLD) occurs when fat is deposited in the liver, without other causes of fatty liver identified.

If you or your family member has ever had an ultrasound of abdomen, there is a 40% chance that the report may mention the presence of Fatty Liver.

Incidence

Incidence of NAFLD in India is 5.1% in normal weight people & 31.7% in overweight adults, which means that 1 in 3 overweight people have Fatty Liver.

Third of India's adult popn have fatty liver, says survey

It Shows Nearly 62% Of People Didn't Know About The Disease

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New Delhi: Fatty liver disease affects nearly one-third of India's adult population. Still, few people are aware about the disease, its symptoms and complications. This was revealed in a sample survey of 2,000 patients and their family members conducted by the Institute of Liver and Biliary Sciences (ILBS), Delhi.

The survey shows nearly 62% of people didn't know about fatty liver disease which, if not managed properly, can lead to serious complications including acute liver failure and liver cancer. Many people didn't know whether they were diabetic, according to the survey report. "The survey was done by an ILBS student. It highlights limited awareness about metabolic health

GROWING CONCERN

in urban adults. A quarter did not know their weight, half did not know their BP and sugar levels, and what levels are unhealthy. More than 60% had no idea how many calories they should consume and what fatty liver is," Dr SK Sarin, vice-chancellor of ILBS.

He added that there is an urgent need for people to know that fatty liver precedes and pre-disposes to diabetes, high cholesterol, blood pres-

sure, heart disease and cancers. "We need to act on the alarm of excess fat in the liver. Nearly one in three Indians, is suffering from fatty liver. Reversal of fatty liver can reduce the burden of all these diseases and save millions of lives," Dr Sarin said.

A study published in The Lancet, Regional-South East Asia recently found that while the overall prevalence of NAFLD in India is around 27%, the disease risk is as high as 54% among persons with metabolic diseases.

The liver, which is the largest organ inside our body, helps to digest food, store energy, and remove toxins. Fatty liver disease is a condition in which fat builds up in the liver. NAFLD is a type of fatty liver disease that is not related to heavy alcohol use. Initially, it causes tiredness and discom-

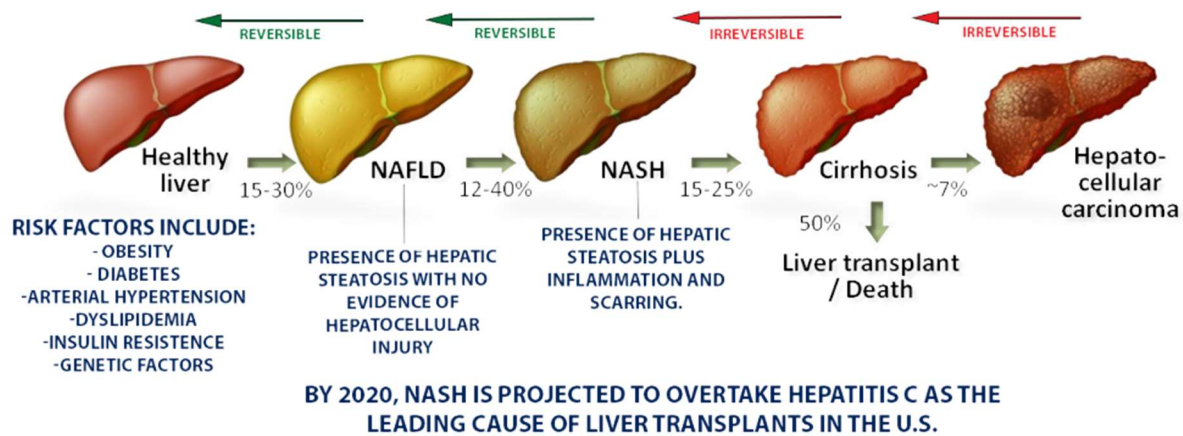
fort in the upper right side of the abdomen but if the condition isn't managed well, NAFLD can lead to serious liver damage including cirrhosis. It is a well-known fact that NAFLD is widespread in South Asian countries.

In the Lancet study, which is based on an assessment of all available data over 17 years (2004-21), researchers found that the prevalence of NAFLD among adults in the South Asian region was comparable to the global average. "A considerable proportion of adults were found to be non-obese and NAFLD prevalence was notably higher among individuals with metabolic abnormalities. Diabetes mellitus, hypertension, dyslipidemia, metabolic syndrome, and obesity (general and central) were associated with NAFLD in the South Asian region," the study said.

What is the risk, if someone has Fatty Liver?

- Liver may develop NASH (Inflammation of Liver cells)
- 20 – 30% cases may develop Cirrhosis (Scarring of Liver tissue), if left untreated.
- Cirrhosis may lead to Liver failure which may require Liver transplant.
- Occasionally it may lead to Liver Cancer (HCC)

THE NON-ALCOHOLIC FATTY LIVER DISEASE (NAFLD) SPECTRUM



Moreover, excess fat in Liver leads to “Insulin Resistance” which is the root cause of weight gain, diabetes & heart disease

Causes of Fatty Liver?



Who is at risk?

People with following problems are at risk of getting Fatty Liver:

- Obesity – specially in males
- Type 2 Diabetes
- Hypothyroidism
- Metabolic Syndrome
- PCOD – (in females)
- Genetic / Hereditary
- Sleep Apnea

How is NAFLD diagnosed?

Symptoms

- Up to 76% have no symptoms
- Fatigue in 50 to 70%
- Right side Abdominal Pain
- Gas or Bloating
- Indigestion

Investigations:

- Fatty Liver is usually diagnosed on USG, CT or MRI
- Your doctor may order some more blood test – LFT, Viral markers etc
- Your doctor may order a “Fibroscan”. A Fibroscan tells you the amount of liver fat & the severity of liver fibrosis or scarring (if present).

Management:

- Weight Loss: 5 to 7% of initial body weight.
- Low carbohydrate diet – Therapeutic Carb restriction (TCR) is now considered the most effective way to reverse Fatty Liver.
- Exercise –
 - 150 min/week of Cardio &/or
 - 45 minutes/week of resistance training, 3 days per week
- In addition, there are some medicines like Saroglitazar which can currently be prescribed for NAFLD & NASH as per INASL guidelines.
- There are some supplements like vitamin D & Omega 3, which can help. Your family physician can prescribe you the same.

Please take the problem of Fatty Liver seriously because once a person develops cirrhosis, the disease becomes irreversible. Cirrhosis & Liver Failure are among the leading cause of Liver Transplant these days.

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