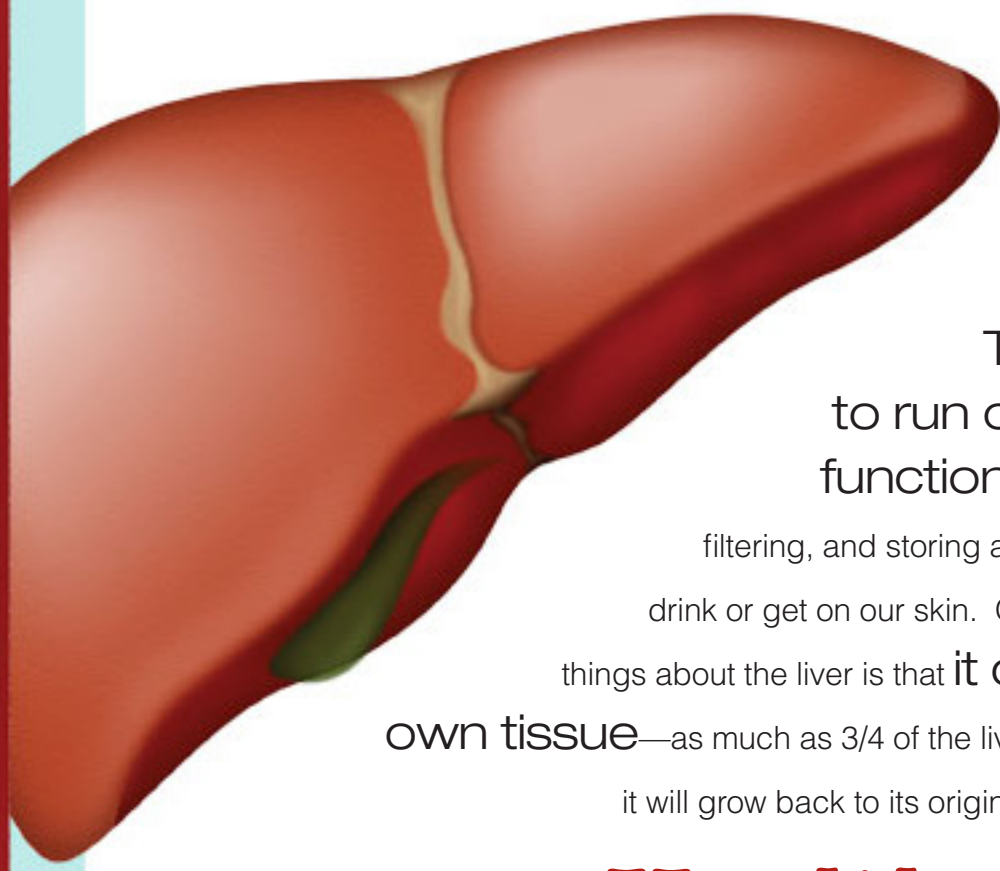


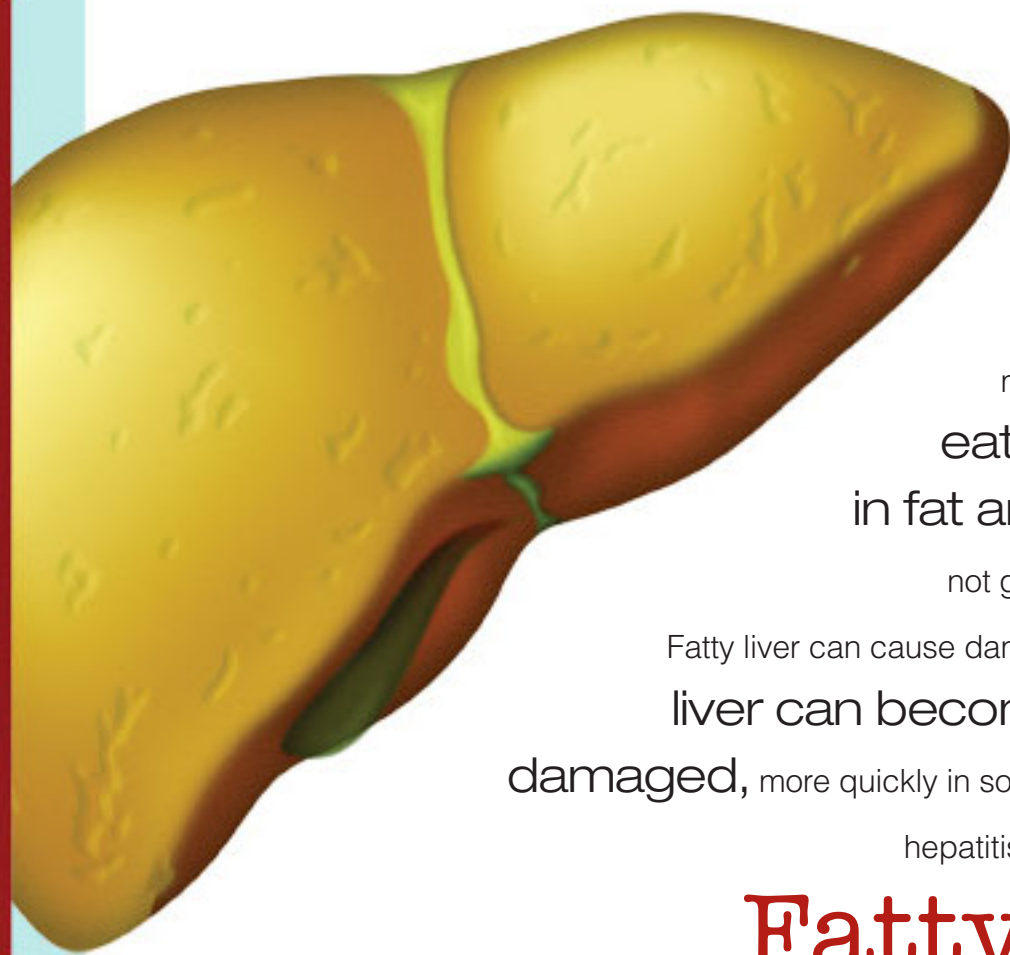
unrestricted flow of blood



The liver is the largest organ in your body. It is reddish brown, and weighs about 3 pounds. The liver's job is to run over 500 bodily functions including processing, filtering, and storing almost everything we eat, drink or get on our skin. One of the most amazing things about the liver is that it can re-grow its own tissue—as much as 3/4 of the liver can be removed, and it will grow back to its original size in about a month.

Healthy Liver

partially restricted flow of blood



When there is a lot of fat in the liver it is called fatty liver. Fatty liver is mostly caused by eating foods high in fat and sugar and from not getting enough exercise. Fatty liver can cause damage to the liver. The liver can become even more damaged, more quickly in someone who has chronic hepatitis B or C and a fatty liver.

Fatty Liver

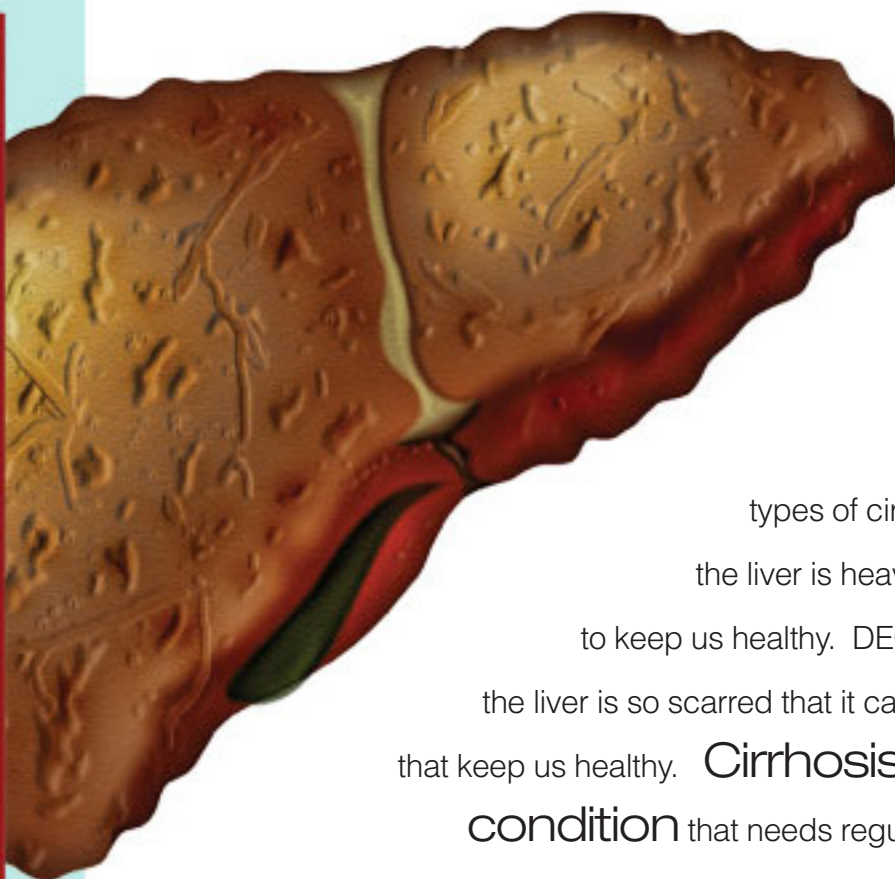
very restricted flow of blood



When the liver becomes inflamed it can lead to light or moderate scarring of the liver. This is called fibrosis (fi-bro-sis). Fibrosis can be caused by many things such as alcohol, drugs and infections like hepatitis B and C. People who have fibrosis may not even know it because the liver is what we call a 'non-complaining' organ—that is, it could be very damaged and you may not even know it.

Liver Fibrosis

totally restricted flow of blood



Cirrhosis (sir-row-sis) is the term used when the liver is so scarred and damaged it can't perform many of the functions that keep us healthy. There are two types of cirrhosis: COMPENSATED is when the liver is heavily scarred but can still work well to keep us healthy. DECOMPENSATED cirrhosis means the liver is so scarred that it can't perform many of the functions that keep us healthy. Cirrhosis is a life-threatening condition that needs regular medical care and monitoring.

Liver Cirrhosis

HEALTHY LIVER

and the Hepatitis Viral

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If you have a risk factor for hepatitis B or hepatitis C...

Get Tested!

The most common types of viral hepatitis are **hepatitis A (HAV)**, **hepatitis B (HBV)** and **hepatitis C (HCV)**. They are all different kinds of viruses that attack and infect the liver.

- ✦ **Hepatitis A (HAV):** There is a vaccine to protect people from getting hepatitis A. If someone becomes infected with hepatitis A the body will fight it off and they won't get it again.

Hepatitis A is spread by the oral-fecal route –that is, fecal matter (poop) gets into the mouth or blood. The best ways to **prevent hepatitis A** are getting the **hepatitis A vaccine**, making sure that you wash your hands with soap and water for at least 15 to 20 seconds, and practicing safer sex.

- ✦ **Hepatitis B (HBV):** There is a vaccine to protect you from getting hepatitis B. If someone gets hepatitis B the body will either fight off the virus or the person develops life-long chronic infection. If you develop chronic hepatitis B there are **medications to take that can control it**.

Hepatitis B is spread by contact with blood and bodily fluids. In the U.S. over 50% (1 out of 2) new infections are from sexual transmission. Hepatitis B can also be spread by sharing needles and works, needlesticks or other exposure to blood. **It can also be spread from mother to child**. HBV can be prevented by vaccination, safer sex practices, and putting a barrier between someone's blood and bodily fluids. Do not share needles or works.

- ✦ **Hepatitis C (HCV):** There is **NO** vaccine to protect **someone** from getting HCV. HCV is spread by blood-to-blood contact. If you get infected with hepatitis C, **the body may be able to fight it off**, but most people will develop life-long chronic infection. There is treatment for hepatitis C that can cure it.

HCV is spread from sharing HCV-infected needles and works used for injecting (drugs, hormones, steroids, vitamins)–even just once, getting an unsafe (non-sterile) tattoo or piercing–prison or street, needlestick or blood exposure. **Other risk factors include** getting a blood transfusion or organ transplant before 1992 or receiving hemodialysis (filtering the blood because the kidneys don't work). To prevent transmission of HCV do not share needles, works, pipes or straws. If you get a **tattoo or piercing** always use a commercial tattoo or piercing shop that practices blood safety–new needles, separate ink pots, autoclaving (heat/steaming of instruments). Sexual transmission is not very common, but safer sex will reduce the risk even more.

Healthy Liver TIPS

- ✦ If you have not been infected with hepatitis A or hepatitis B–get vaccinated to protect yourself. It is even more important if you already have a liver disease to get vaccinated because having more than one hepatitis infection causes the liver to become even more damaged.
- ✦ Avoid alcohol and street drugs. If you can't stop try to slow down and get help to stop.
- ✦ Try to eat a healthy diet that includes lots of fruits, vegetables and lean meats.
- ✦ Work closely with your doctor and nurse to make sure that you are doing everything you can to keep your liver healthy.

Talk with your doctor or nurse about the medicines to treat hepatitis B and hepatitis C

- ✦ There are effective medications to treat chronic hepatitis B such as pills and pegylated interferon that can control the hepatitis B virus and prevent future damage.
- ✦ The medicines to treat chronic hepatitis C include pegylated interferon and ribavirin. The medicines can get rid of or cure hepatitis C in about 5 out of 10 people who take them.



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