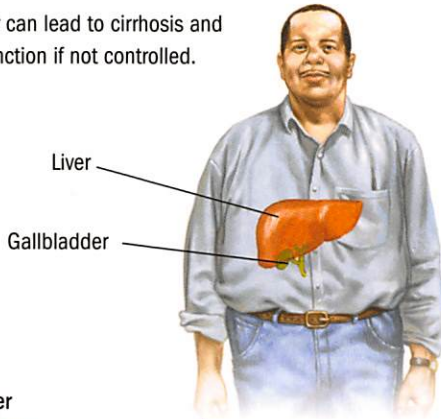
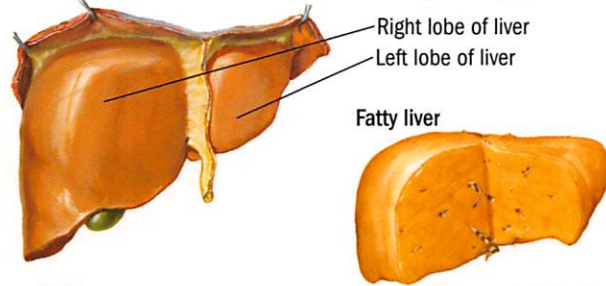


MANAGING YOUR FATTY LIVER

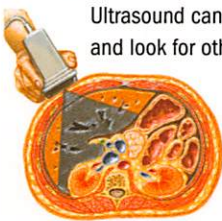
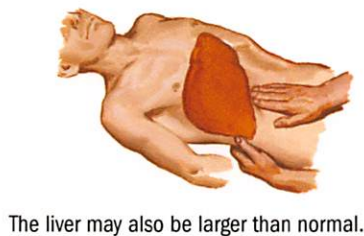
A fatty liver can lead to cirrhosis and liver malfunction if not controlled.



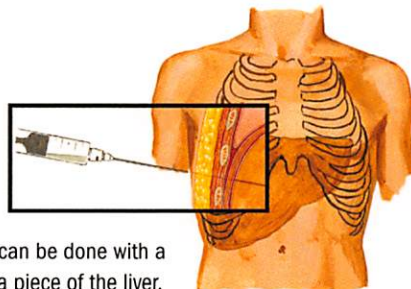
Normal liver



Symptoms may include tiredness and belly pain, but often fatty liver is not noticed until a blood test is done.



Ultrasound can measure liver size and look for other problems.



If necessary, a liver biopsy can be done with a special needle to take out a piece of the liver.

What Is a Fatty Liver?

A fatty liver refers to a collection of too much fat in liver cells that often occurs in patients with diabetes or obesity or patients who drink too much alcohol. A fatty liver by itself is not harmful, but prolonged swelling (inflammation) of a fatty liver can lead to scarring (cirrhosis) and poor functioning of the liver.

Nonalcoholic fatty liver disease (nonalcoholic steatohepatitis, or NASH) is inflammation of a fatty liver that is not caused by alcohol or hepatitis. It is more common in overweight people, but the specific cause is unknown. NASH is not transmitted from person to person or from generation to generation. NASH is the most common liver disease in teenagers and the third leading cause of liver disease in adults.

What Are the Symptoms of Fatty Liver?

Most patients with fatty liver or NASH do not know they have it because they usually have no symptoms. Some patients may feel tired, have pain in the abdomen (belly), or just not feel right.

How Is Fatty Liver Diagnosed?

The doctor may make this diagnosis by accident when testing for another complaint. Often, liver function blood test results are not normal. In this case, the doctor will take a detailed history and do a physical examination and other studies to rule out common causes of these results (such as hepatitis, alcohol, or too much iron in the liver). At an examination, the doctor may feel for a liver or spleen that is too large but in most cases this will not be evident on physical examination.

The doctor may also want special x-ray studies and scans to take pictures of organs in the body: ultrasound scan, computed tomography (CT), or magnetic resonance imaging (MRI).

A diagnosis of NASH is proved by a liver biopsy. In a biopsy, a large needle is inserted into the liver. Then, a small piece of the liver is removed and examined under a microscope.