

DIABETES & LIVER HEALTH

Did you know?

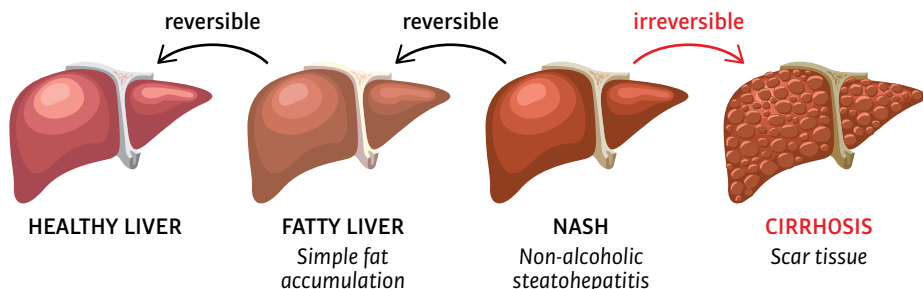
- There is a silent epidemic of Non-Alcoholic Fatty Liver Disease (NAFLD) in Ireland.
- Patients with diabetes (type 2), obesity, and high cholesterol are at greater risk of developing NAFLD which, if undiagnosed and left untreated, may lead to cirrhosis of the liver.
- NAFLD patients can develop cirrhosis without alcohol consumption.
- Despite a growing epidemic of Non-Alcoholic Fatty Liver Disease in Ireland, most patients with type 2 diabetes are not aware that they may carry a risk of developing liver disease as a consequence of diabetes due to Non-alcoholic Fatty Liver Disease (NAFLD).

Why should I learn about Fatty Liver Disease?

After assessing more than 400 patients with NAFLD, we discovered that 1 out of 4 patients had advanced fibrosis or cirrhosis. In addition, 1 out of 3 of these patients had type 2 diabetes. We need to raise awareness among the diabetes community.

Professor Suzanne Norris, Consultant Hepatologist

The spectrum of non-alcoholic fatty liver disease



NAFLD facts

- NAFLD is defined as an excess of fat on the liver in the absence of increased alcohol intake.
- It is a common condition that affects up to 25% of the adult population and has become the most common cause of chronic liver disease in developed countries.
- Several factors increase the risk of developing NAFLD, including diabetes (especially type 2), being overweight/obese, high blood pressure, high cholesterol and high triglycerides.
- NAFLD often has no symptoms.
- Routine liver blood tests (LFTs) do not differentiate NAFLD from NASH or accurately stage fibrosis (liver scarring).
- Approximately 20% of patients diagnosed with NAFLD will develop fat-related inflammation of the liver, called Non-Alcoholic Steato-Hepatitis (NASH). NASH may lead to liver damage and scarring (fibrosis) and, if untreated over time, may lead to cirrhosis of the liver.
- NAFLD can be prevented and/or reversed through healthy eating, exercise and weight reduction.

How can I be screened for NAFLD?

FibroScan® Liver Assessment A 15 minute non-invasive, pain-free liver scan

International Clinical Practice Guidelines recommend that for type 2 diabetes patients, the presence of NAFLD should be screened irrespective of liver enzyme blood tests, since type 2 diabetes patients are at high risk of liver disease progression. The Fibroscan® Liver Assessment has been recommended as a validated non-

invasive procedure for the identification of patients at risk of NAFLD. In some cases, a liver biopsy may be required.

FibroScan® Assessments can be accessed by referral through the Public Hospital System and also directly at some Private Hospitals, including the Blackrock Clinic and Beacon Hospital.



For further information on NAFLD and screening please visit:

www.liverwellness.ie