



Your Liver. Your Life.

Facts At a Glance

The Liver and Liver Disease

- The liver is one of the body's largest organs, performing hundreds of functions every day. It removes harmful substances from the blood, makes bile to help digest fat, and stores energy.
- 30 million Americans - one in every 10 - are or have been affected by a liver, biliary, or gallbladder disease.
- More than 42,000 people die of liver disease* every year. Liver disease is the ninth leading disease-related cause of death in the United States.
- Many forms of liver disease are preventable, and many more can be treated effectively if detected early.
- About 15,000 children are hospitalized every year with pediatric liver diseases or disorders.
- There are more than 100 types of liver disease, but hepatitis A, B, and C are the most common.
- There are vaccines that can protect you against hepatitis A and B, but none that protect you against hepatitis C.
- Chronic hepatitis C and alcoholic liver disease are the leading causes of cirrhosis in the U.S.
- About one-third of the U.S. population becomes infected with hepatitis A during their lifetime, though most recover in a few weeks.
- More than four million American have been infected with hepatitis C. It is responsible for 8,000-10,000 deaths annually.
- 1.4 million Americans are chronically infected with hepatitis B. It is responsible for 5,000 deaths annually.
- Hepatitis B and C infection significantly increase the risk of liver cancer, one of the only cancers currently on the rise in the U.S.
- As of January 4, 2008, there are 16,667 individuals on the waiting list for a liver transplant. In 2006, 1,685 people died while waiting for a suitable donor.
- Hepatitis C is the number one reason for liver transplantation in this country.
- Nonalcoholic fatty liver disease (NAFLD), an obesity-related chronic liver disease, may affect as many as one in every four adults over the age of 18.

* including chronic liver disease, cirrhosis, liver cancer, and cancer of the bile ducts

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