

The UConn Buzz



Fatty Liver Disease

CT Quit Line: 1-800-QUIT-NOW

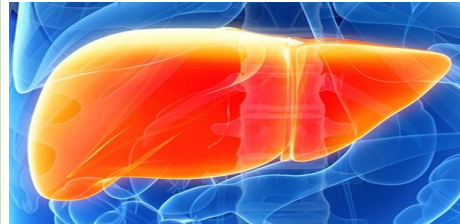
CT Poison Control 24/hotline: 1-800-222-1222

Maintaining a healthy liver is essential to good health. “The liver performs hundreds of functions, including storing nutrients; removing waste products and worn-out cells from the blood; filtering and processing chemicals in food, alcohol and medications; and producing bile, a solution that helps digest fats and eliminate waste products” (CDC). The liver is also part of the immune system and helps by cleaning bacteria from the blood. Damage to the liver can lead to serious health problems, including leaving individuals more vulnerable to infections.

Fatty liver disease is a condition in which fat builds up in your liver. Nonalcoholic fatty liver disease (NAFLD) is a condition in which excess fat builds up in your liver but this buildup of fat is **not** caused by heavy alcohol use. When heavy alcohol use causes fat to build up in the liver, this condition is called alcohol-associated fatty liver disease. According to the NIH, “fatty liver disease has become increasingly common. But it often has no symptoms”.

While many people don’t have symptoms, symptoms may include upper right-side abdominal pain, fatigue, and jaundice (yellowing skin and eyes).

The causes of fatty liver disease are not completely known. However, there are certain factors that can put you at higher risk. Some of these factors are: certain health conditions such as diabetes, smoking, unhealthy diet, high cholesterol, and excessive alcohol intake.



Source: NIH

“People with obesity or type 2 diabetes are at greater risk of nonalcoholic fatty liver disease. It affects about 75% of people who carry excess weight and 90% of people with severe obesity” (NIH).

Normally there is a small amount of fat build-up around the liver. However, excessive amounts of fat can cause inflammation and damage to the liver.

“In most cases, Fatty liver disease doesn’t cause any serious problems or prevent your liver from functioning normally. But for 7% to 30 % of people with the condition, fatty liver disease gets worse over time” (Cleveland Clinic). For those people with serious complications the liver can go on to become swollen, scarred, and then extensive scarring can cause cirrhosis of the liver.

Cirrhosis is extensive scarring of the liver causing fibroids. This scarring causes the liver to stop functioning normally. As cirrhosis worsens the liver can start to fail. Cirrhosis can be the result of various conditions such as: chronic hepatitis, alcoholic liver disease, or fatty liver disease.

Although not everything is known about fatty liver disease there are important steps people can take to re-

duce their risk of the disease and its complications.

Protect Yourself Against Fatty Liver Disease

- Try to maintain a healthy weight and eat sensible portions.
- Try to lose weight gradually if you’re overweight.
- Limit how much fat you eat. Replace saturated fats with healthier unsaturated fats, like those in fish, and nuts.
- Eat more fruits, vegetables, and whole grains.
- Avoid foods and drinks with large amounts of sugars, especially fructose. These include sweetened soda, sports drinks, sweetened tea, and juices.
- Avoid heavy alcohol use. Drinking too much alcohol can have harmful effects on the liver. If you think you have a problem with alcohol call Infoline at 211 for help.
- Quit smoking. Smoking may increase the chances of developing non-alcohol fatty liver disease. Get free help at smokefree.gov, 1-800-QUIT-NOW (1-800-784-8669), or by texting QUIT to 47848.

Source: National Institute of Health, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Mayo Clinic, The Cleveland Clinic

HAPPENINGS AROUND TOWN

[Short Attention Span Literary Club](#), sponsored by the Connecticut Historical Society. This free event is via Zoom on the first day of the month from 1-2 pm. Anyone can join in, no commitment required. They get together to chat about short stories.

[Sky's the Limit \(STL\) Hiking Challenge 2023.](#)

The STL Hiking Challenge begins on 3/20/23. Visit 15 CT State Parks and Forests by hiking and walking. FREE program and open to all. DEEP will release the 15 state parks on the STL Challenge on 03/20/2023 The locations and scenery will vary at each location and we promise to make it worth the time out on the trails! Participants who hike or walk 10 of the 15 trails will receive a "Sky's the Limit" hiking staff medallion and a certificate for their efforts. For hiking or walking all 15 locations, in addition to the medallion and certificate, 50 participants will receive a chance to win a hand-carved hiking staff made by the CT DEEP Sawyer.

[Spirit of Spring Tolland Road Race](#), 1 Eagle Hill Rd, Tolland. Sat April 15, For 47 years, the Spirit of Spring Road Race has welcomed runners to compete in one of the first races of the running season. Originally a 5-mile race, this is the 13th year the race has been shortened to a NEW certified 5k course starting and ending at the Tolland High School. Please click [HERE](#) for course map!

[Nathan Hale Homestead](#) 2299 South Street, Coventry Opens for tours in May, At the Nathan Hale Homestead, it is 1776, and a war for independence is underway. Learn how members of the Hale family supported the war effort by gathering supplies, helping their neighbors, and serving in the Continental Army.



Green Salad with Cranberry Vinaigrette

INGREDIENTS ♦ 1 cup sliced almonds ♦ 3 tablespoons red wine vinegar ♦ 1/4 cup olive oil ♦ 1/4 cup fresh cranberries ♦ 1 tablespoon Dijon mustard ♦ 1/2 teaspoon minced garlic ♦ 1/2 teaspoon salt ♦ 1/2 teaspoon ground black pepper ♦ 2 tablespoons water ♦ 1/2 red onion, thinly sliced ♦ 1/4 cup grated Swiss cheese ♦ 4 ounces crumbled blue cheese ♦ 1 pound mixed salad greens

DIRECTIONS 1. Preheat oven to 375 degrees F. Arrange almonds in a single layer on a baking sheet. Toast in oven for 5 minutes, or until nuts begin to brown. 2. In a blender or food processor, combine the vinegar, oil, cranberries, mustard, garlic, salt, pepper, and water. Process until smooth. 3. In a large bowl, toss the almonds, onion, blue cheese, and greens with the vinegar mixture until evenly coated. Enjoy!



It's Spring, Improve Your Health with Gardening

Gardening can be a great way to enjoy the outdoors, get physical activity, beautify the community, and grow nutritious food.

There have been several studies and trials demonstrating the positive effects of being in contact with plants. Studies have shown a reduction in stress, high blood pressure and anxiety.

Gardening helps older adults stay fit and flexible which reduces their risk of falling.

Children also benefit from gardening. Studies found that children were more likely to eat more fruits and vegetables when they work in the garden.

"Working in the garden restores dexterity and strength, and the

aerobic exercise that is involved can easily use the same number of calories as might be expended in a gym"

[\(Clinical Medicine\)](#)

So get out in the garden but make sure to follow these safety tips.

Safety Tips for Gardeners

- Wear gloves to avoid skin rashes, cuts, and contaminants.
- Keep harmful chemicals, tools, and equipment out of kids' reach. Read all instructions and labels.
- Cut your risk for sunburn and skin cancer by wearing wide-brimmed hats, sun shades, and sunscreen SPF of 15 or higher.

- Protect against mosquitoes and ticks. Use insect repellent & wear long-sleeved shirts.
- If you're outside in hot weather, drink plenty of water. Pay attention to signs of heat-related illness: high body temperature, headache, rapid pulse, dizziness, nausea, or confusion, Seek emergency medical care if needed.

Be Well is an employee wellness program provided through the Eastern Highlands Health District with funding from The CT Department of Health. The goal of the program is to make the healthy choice the easy choice.

