



# PROTECTION AGAINST LIVER DISEASES

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**L**iver is such an organ that its damage affects the entire body. Unlike other organs, the functions of the liver are very wide. The list of liver diseases is quite long and the medical world, recognizing the vastness of the topic, has established a separate department for it called haepatology.

Liver regulates the metabolism of the entire body. Everything that is eaten goes to the liver and it is the liver that segregates the food elements into useful and non-useful and thus determines their use.

Liver converts glucose into glycogen. Liver makes such a product that breaks down fat, converts the excess proteins into urea and sends it to the kidney from where it is removed from the body in the form of urine. It is the liver that removes harmful substances such as alcohol from blood. Apart from glycogen, the liver also stores a number of vitamins such as Vitamin A, D, K and B-12 and at the same time also regulates their amount as well as that of glucose in the blood. Whatever medicine is taken by you also reaches the liver. Hence, as soon as there is a problem with the liver, all the above-mentioned functions too start having problems.

Haepatitis, Polio, Cirrhosis, Cancer, etc. are some common diseases of the liver.

Liver diseases are not easily detected. When the effects are seen in the body, it is quite late.

## The enemies of liver

Modern lifestyle has made alcohol something that is used everyday. People are more interested in junk food found in the market rather than in homemade food. This combination of alcohol and junk food has made the liver very weak. Both of these deposit high amounts of fat in

the liver, which makes the liver home to many diseases. Stopping the consumption of both these items can help in preventing liver disorders.

In India, another important cause for liver disorders is virus infection. The haepatitis virus spreads through excrement. In India, four kinds of haepatitis virus are found – A, B, C and E. The most common among these are the A and E strains. Haepatitis A affects children while adults are inflicted with Haepatitis E. This causes inflammation in the body and on lack of treatment, it leads to jaundice. Liver cirrhosis and cancer are more deadly diseases of the liver than haepatitis. In cirrhosis, the liver shrinks. Apart from unavoidable reasons, this disease occurs because of excessive intake of alcohol. Alcohol is also a cause for liver cancer.

Liver disorders also occur because of the effect of medicine. Another 'gift' of the modern lifestyle is diabetes, the medicines for which affect the liver. In fact, long-term consumption of certain antibiotic medicine also harms the liver.

## Symptoms

Almost all the symptoms of liver disorders are similar – stomachache or inflammation, the colour of urine become bright and the excrement becomes scarlet red or deep yellow. The complexion become pale and eyes turn yellow. Digestion gets upset.

On the other hand, the liver has tremendous fighting ability, and simply by correcting food habits and choosing the right food can bring about improvement in liver conditions.

Whenever food is not digested, there is a feeling of uneasiness, weakness, continuous fever, and yellow colouration of urine, skin and eyes, the liver should be examined.

## Food for the liver

The following are good for the health of the liver: herbs such as Bathua and Akoi, green vegetables, milk of goat and cow, papaya, pomegranate, figs, raisins, sultanas, sugarcane juice, radish juice, paneer, etc. Apart from these, Amla, Brahmi, Bhringraj, Ghritkumari, Punarnava, etc. improves liver processes. Fast food, meat, fried foodstuff, mustard oil, nicotine-added stuff

such as cigarettes, tea, coffee, etc. should be given up. Do not include fried food in your diet. Eat as little as possible of salty things. Use less salt. Increase the intake of lemon juice, onion, garlic, black pepper, and high-fibre foods.

### **Enlargement of liver (Haepatomegaly)**

The liver lies below the muscles. The muscles protect it from external injuries. When the liver enlarges, it increases below the muscles and in such a case, the left side of the stomach looks enlarged. The enlargement of the liver can be detected by looking at the patient or by feeling the area.

A number of liquid substances are emitted by the liver, which help in digestion of food. Even a little problem of the liver will lead to disturbance in our digestion.

### **Reason for liver enlargement:**

Various kinds of virus or viral diseases such as malaria, syphilis, typhoid, T.B., or pneumonia lead to enlargement of the liver.

### **Inflammation of the liver**

- ❖ In liver inflammation, as soon as the area above the liver is touched, it pains. Jaundice occurs. There is lack of appetite. Fever may occur. The spleen also enlarges. There is rash on the body. The patient becomes tired and weak.
- ❖ When there is ulcer in the liver, the patient feels cold. Diarrhoea and vomiting also enlarges the liver.
- ❖ The size of the liver increases when there is cancer of the liver. The upper surface becomes hard or grainy and there is extreme pain in the liver.

### **Fatty Liver**

- ❖ In this disease, oiliness increases and hence the upper surface of the liver becomes soft and thin. This disorder is often seen in obese people or in diabetics.
- ❖ The liver may also increase due to heart disorders and inflammation of the heart. The patient experiences shortage of breath at all times. There is lack of appetite. The left side always seems heavy. There is a constant ball formation in the liver.
- ❖ Daily intake of alcohol definitely leads to enlarged liver and the patient loses all interest in food.

### **The ill-effects of an enlarged liver**

Food is not digested. Weakness sets in. the colour becomes yellow. Slowly the cells of the liver get damaged and after enlargement, the liver starts shrinking and the size gets reduced.

During the enlarged state of the liver, the stomach becomes inflamed. The stomach gets filled with water. The liver gets pus-filled and slowly the stomach is affected by T.B. or cancer.

### **Protein and enlargement of liver in infants**

From 6 months to two years of age, the liver of children sometimes increases or becomes hard. This is known as enlargement of liver in infants.

**Reason:** Infant liver enlargement is seen mainly in those children who drink more of cow and buffalo milk and less of mother's milk. This is because this milk is thinned slightly with water and a little sugar is added before given to drink. In such a case the amount of protein decreases in a child's while carbohydrate and fat increases. This increases the fat deposition in the liver.

In the same way, in those children who, as soon as they are six months old, are immediately given rice, sweets, spicy food, etc. in high quantities, store high quantity of fat in their liver.

In such a situation if the child is also affected by indigestion, dysentery, constipation, etc. then there is a strong possibility of damage to the liver cells.

**Harmful effects:** In this disorder, initially there is accumulation of fat in the cells, and then the process of damage starts. As the cells get destroyed, new cells immediately grow and then the new cells too gets eroded. In this way, due to destruction of cells, the ligaments etc. surrounding the liver also get enlarged. Infant enlargement of liver is also similar to cirrhosis seen in adults.

### **Stage-wise symptoms of infant enlargement of liver:**

The first stage of infant liver enlargement is also known as the state of purification of entrails. This stage starts very slowly and in unidentifiable form. In this stage of the disease, a child often eats large quantities of food or his appetite decreases. Because of poor digestion the stomach of the child gets filled with air which makes his stomach seem swollen. He is affected with constipation. Sometimes he may have light diarrhoea. Because of non-digestion of food, his complexion may become dusky. The body becomes somewhat weak.

Sometimes he may also have low fever.

The second stage of this disease is called the stage of liver enlargement. During this stage, the liver becomes big and on touching, it feels hard. The spleen also enlarges. He is affected by constipation or dysentery. He also has constant fever, which is high. His eyes appear somewhat yellow. The quantity of urine reduces and becomes yellow in colour.

The third stage is known as jaundice or hardness of the liver. In this stage, jaundice is seen in the eyes. The stomach of such children rise quite high. Veins are seen all over it.

The liver is somewhat smaller in size but much harder. The excrement is dark in colour and smells bad. There is constant fever. The child lies listless. In the first and second stages, the disease can be cured with proper treatment but in the third stage, treatment becomes difficult.

### Treatment

❖ If the mother is given liver-protecting amino acid

and vitamin-B during pregnancy, then the child should be raised only on mother's milk to prevent liver enlargement.

- ❖ If the mother does not produce enough milk then the baby should be given 'half cream milk' from tins.
- ❖ Even when other food is started, the quantity of rice, sugar, clarified butter and common food times should be increased very, very slowly as too much sudden carbohydrate and fat increase leads to liver disorder.
- ❖ Giving vitamin B and C to the child at this time prevents the onset of this disease.
- ❖ At the early stages of this disease, milk should be stopped for the child and he should be kept on watered down milk only. Along with this, he should also be given appropriate amounts of water and fruit juice. After the dysentery stops, he child should be given oil-free milk as food. Injection of vitamin B-12 also helps in this disease. It is mentionable that numerous patients have been cured of liver disorders in Patanjali Yogpeeth, Haridwar.

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