

How common are Fatty liver and Fatty liver disease?

NAFL and NAFLD have been the problem of the western population who consume mostly commercial prepared foods. With industrialization, urbanization, and adoption of western-style commercial foods, this problem has spread globally to South America, the Middle East, and to Asian countries. The global prevalence of NAFL currently, is 24-25% with over one billion people affected. The highest incidence of fatty liver disease, is in South America, followed by the Middle East, and Asia (India and China). Fatty liver by itself does not cause any symptoms in most cases, so the prevalence most likely is underestimated.

The epidemiological studies in India suggest the prevalence of fatty liver is in the range of 9-32%. The risk group with high prevalence being:

- Urban city dwellers – In comparison to rural populations, the city dwellers consume higher amounts of synthetic commercial foods, western-style foods, and sugary beverages including fruit juices fresh or packaged. Fruit juices and cola beverages are rich in fructose sugar, which gets converted to fatty acids in the liver. If one were to consume two servings of cola beverages or fruit juices daily for six months, they have a good chance of developing a fatty liver.
- Overweight and obese individuals.
- Lean individuals with larger than normal waistline (abdominal obesity)
- Patients with Type 2 diabetes
- Individuals with a prediabetic condition such as Metabolic syndrome, PCOS (Polycystic ovarian disease of young females with menstrual irregularity and infertility).
- Patients with Hypothyroidism
- Individuals who on routine blood testing are found to have high blood uric acid levels.
- Individuals with Dyslipidemia- As outlined above, fats when inside the body are called Lipids. When the doctors want to check the level of fats in the blood, they order a test called "Lipid Profile." The harmful lipids include- LDL- cholesterol, and Triglycerides.
- Individuals with obstructive sleep apnea

