

Middle aged population under the radar of fatty liver disease due to obesity

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Poor and sedentary lifestyle among young adults in India is significantly contributing to the rise in number of obese people. Obesity, which is the most significant factor contributing for the gradual onset of fatty liver is also increasing among the middle aged population.

Fatty liver, a metabolic syndrome has cluster of conditions such as increased blood pressure, high blood sugar, excess body fat around the waist, abnormal cholesterol levels that occur together thus increases the risk of fatty liver. The diagnosis of fatty liver involves a routine ultrasound. Liver function tests are also conducted to evaluate the liver damage.

“Fatty liver is the accumulation of excessive fat in the liver. Unfortunately most patients do not experience symptoms of fatty liver. Symptoms begin to notice once the liver disease progresses mainly this includes loss of appetite, fatigue, jaundice confusion, bleeding with minor trauma. Accumulated fat in liver causes a severe damage to liver leading to a condition known as Non Alcoholic Steato Hepatitis (NASH) which ultimately leads to cirrhosis. Lack of awareness about the seriousness of the condition is a major concern. Fatty liver if left undiagnosed and untreated can not only to progressive liver damage but also can cause liver cancer.” Dr Nivedita Pandey consultant Gastroenterology, Max Super Speciality Hospital, Saket

However, fatty liver is a lifestyle disease; a holistic approach is required to prevent the future progression of it. Dietary change is not alone beneficial; it must be accompanied by exercise. Research work has shown losing even 3-5% of the current weight can improve the functioning of liver.

“The treatment of liver fatty liver depends on the stage of it. Grade 1 fatty liver is an early stage that is usually reversible if a patient adopts healthy lifestyle practices such as regular exercise, diet control. As the stage of fatty liver progresses, liver damage is seen. Controlling the diabetes and high cholesterol level are also important factors. Vitamin E has shown to have some benefit. However, advanced liver disease is present transplant is a curative option.” Added Dr Nivedita

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