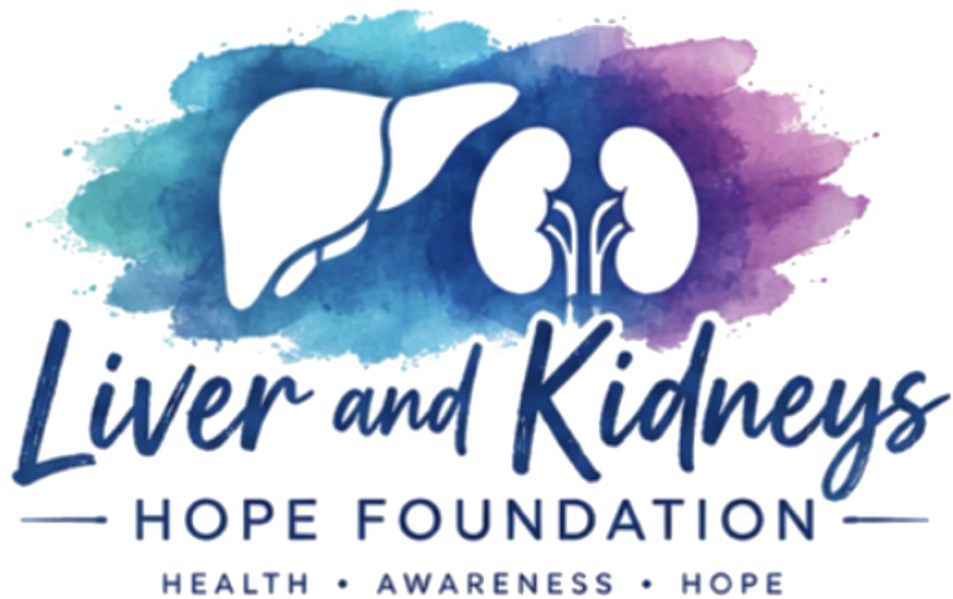




THE LIVER GLOSSARY

A Complete A-to-Z Guide to Liver Terms

Anatomy, diseases, tests, treatments, and transplant in plain language

Inside this guide

- More than 420 liver terms explained simply
- Anatomy, function, diseases, symptoms, and tests
- Imaging, procedures, medicines, nutrition, and transplant
- Abbreviations, word parts, and a liver tests quick guide
 - Terms by category and resources

For patients, families, students, and community members

Educational purposes only. The Liver and Kidney Hope Foundation is not a medical provider. This guide does not replace the advice of your healthcare team.

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How to use this glossary

This glossary explains **431 liver-related terms** in plain language: anatomy, how the liver works, diseases, symptoms, tests, imaging, procedures, medicines, nutrition, genetics, and transplant. Terms are listed **alphabetically**, and each has a colored **category tag**. Where a term has another name or a related entry, the definition says See followed by that term. Reference sections at the back list common **abbreviations**, **word parts**, a **quick guide to liver tests**, and **terms by category**.

Tag	Meaning	Tag	Meaning
ANATOMY	Parts of the liver and nearby structures	MEDICINE	Medicines
FUNCTION	How the liver works	NUTRITION	Food, drink, and lifestyle
DISEASE	Diseases and conditions	TRANSPLANT	Transplant and donation
SYMPTOM	Symptoms and physical signs	GENETIC	Inherited conditions
TEST	Laboratory and other tests	PATHOLOGY	What tissue shows under the microscope
IMAGING	Imaging tests	PEOPLE	Care team and support
PROCEDURE	Procedures and treatments		

Important

This glossary is for education and is **not medical advice**. Definitions are simplified, and normal values and treatments vary by person and laboratory. Always ask your own liver doctor, nurse, or pharmacist about your situation.

Where to begin

New to liver terms? Start with: **liver, bile, hepatitis, fibrosis, cirrhosis, portal hypertension, MELD score, liver function tests, and transplant list**. Then look up anything you hear at appointments.

PART 1

A to Z Glossary

A

Abdominal ultrasound	A painless test that uses sound waves to show the liver, gallbladder, bile ducts, spleen, and blood flow. It uses no radiation and is often the first liver imaging test.	IMAGING
Ablation	A treatment that destroys a tumor with heat (radiofrequency or microwave) or cold, usually through a needle guided by imaging. Used for small liver tumors.	PROCEDURE
Abscess, liver	A pocket of pus in the liver caused by bacteria, amoebae, or another germ. It usually needs drainage and antibiotics.	DISEASE
Acetaminophen	A common pain and fever medicine (also called paracetamol; Tylenol is a brand). Safe at label doses, but overdose is a leading cause of acute liver failure in the United States.	MEDICINE
Acetaminophen toxicity	Liver injury from too much acetaminophen, taken at once or over several days. The antidote, N-acetylcysteine (NAC), works best when given early.	DISEASE

Acinus	A diamond-shaped microscopic unit of liver tissue centered on the small vessels of a portal tract. It is divided into three zones based on distance from blood supply. See Zone 1, 2, 3.	ANATOMY
Acute hepatitis	Sudden liver inflammation that lasts less than six months. Causes include viruses, medicines, toxins, and autoimmune disease.	DISEASE
Acute liver failure	Rapid loss of liver function over days to weeks in a person with no known prior liver disease, causing jaundice, abnormal clotting, and confusion. It is a medical emergency; transplant may be needed.	DISEASE
Acute-on-chronic liver failure (ACLF)	A sudden worsening of chronic liver disease, often after an infection, bleeding, or alcohol binge, leading to failure of the liver and sometimes other organs.	DISEASE
Adenoma, hepatic	A benign (non-cancerous) liver tumor, most often in women who use estrogen-containing birth control. Large ones can bleed or, rarely, turn cancerous.	DISEASE
Aflatoxin	A poison made by molds that contaminate stored grains, corn, and nuts. Long-term exposure raises the risk of liver cancer, especially with hepatitis B.	DISEASE
Alagille syndrome	An inherited condition with too few bile ducts in the liver, often with heart, spine, eye, and facial features. It causes cholestasis and itching, usually in childhood.	GENETIC
Albumin	The main protein in blood, made by the liver. It keeps fluid in blood vessels. A low level can reflect poor liver function, malnutrition, kidney protein loss, or inflammation.	TEST
Albumin infusion	Giving albumin through a vein, for example after large-volume paracentesis or in hepatorenal syndrome, to help support blood volume and kidney blood flow.	PROCEDURE
Alcohol use disorder (AUD)	A medical condition in which a person cannot control or stop drinking despite harm. It is treatable with counseling, support groups, and medicines.	DISEASE
Alcohol-associated hepatitis	Serious liver inflammation from heavy drinking, causing jaundice, fever, and an enlarged tender liver. Severe cases can be life threatening.	DISEASE
Alcohol-associated liver disease (ALD)	The range of liver damage caused by alcohol: fatty liver, alcohol-associated hepatitis, fibrosis, and cirrhosis. Also called alcohol-related liver disease.	DISEASE
Alkaline phosphatase (ALP)	An enzyme found in bile duct cells and bone. A high level often points to a bile duct blockage or cholestasis, but can also come from bone disease or pregnancy.	TEST
Alpha-1 antitrypsin deficiency	An inherited disorder in which a faulty protein builds up in liver cells and is missing from the blood, which can cause liver and lung disease.	GENETIC
Alpha-fetoprotein (AFP)	A blood protein used as a tumor marker. High levels can suggest hepatocellular carcinoma, but AFP can also rise in pregnancy, hepatitis, and other conditions.	TEST
ALT (alanine aminotransferase)	An enzyme found mainly in liver cells. It leaks into the blood when liver cells are injured, so a high ALT suggests liver inflammation or damage.	TEST

Amebic liver abscess	A liver abscess caused by the parasite <i>Entamoeba histolytica</i> , usually after travel to or living in places with poor sanitation.	DISEASE
Ammonia	A waste product of protein breakdown, made in the gut and body. The liver turns it into urea. When the liver fails or blood bypasses it, ammonia can build up and affect the brain.	FUNCTION
Ampulla of Vater	The small opening where the common bile duct and pancreatic duct join and empty into the duodenum. It is surrounded by the sphincter of Oddi.	ANATOMY
Anastomosis	A surgical connection between two structures, such as between blood vessels or bile ducts, as in liver transplant.	PROCEDURE
Angiography	An imaging test in which contrast dye is injected into blood vessels to show them on X-rays or CT. It is also used to treat liver tumors and bleeding.	IMAGING
Anticoagulant	A blood thinner, such as warfarin or heparin, that slows clotting. Used in some liver conditions, such as portal vein thrombosis.	MEDICINE
Anti-mitochondrial antibody (AMA)	An autoantibody found in most people with primary biliary cholangitis. A positive test with abnormal liver tests strongly suggests that diagnosis.	TEST
Antinuclear antibody (ANA)	An autoantibody test. It can be positive in autoimmune hepatitis and other autoimmune diseases, but can also be positive in healthy people.	TEST
Antiviral therapy	Medicines that fight viruses. For hepatitis B they suppress the virus; for hepatitis C, direct-acting antivirals can cure the infection.	MEDICINE
Arterial phase	The moment on a contrast CT or MRI, seconds after injection, when the hepatic artery is brightest. Many liver tumors are best seen in this phase.	IMAGING
Ascites	A buildup of fluid in the belly, causing swelling and weight gain. It is a common complication of cirrhosis and portal hypertension.	SYMPTOM
Ascitic fluid analysis	Laboratory testing of fluid removed by paracentesis: cell counts to look for infection, and albumin to find the cause of ascites.	TEST
AST (aspartate aminotransferase)	An enzyme found in the liver, heart, and muscle. A high level can signal liver injury, and a high AST-to-ALT ratio is often seen in alcohol-related liver disease and cirrhosis.	TEST
Asterixis	A flapping tremor of the outstretched hands, a sign of hepatic encephalopathy.	SYMPTOM
Autoimmune hepatitis	A condition in which the immune system attacks liver cells. It is treated with steroids and immune-suppressing medicines.	DISEASE

B

Bare area	A triangular patch on the back of the liver attached directly to the diaphragm, with no peritoneal covering.	ANATOMY
Bariatric surgery	Weight-loss surgery such as sleeve gastrectomy or gastric bypass. It can improve fatty liver, but needs special planning in people with cirrhosis.	PROCEDURE
Beta-blocker	A medicine that lowers heart rate and blood pressure. Nonselective types (propranolol, nadolol, carvedilol) also lower portal vein pressure and help prevent variceal bleeding.	MEDICINE

Bile	A yellow-green fluid made by the liver and stored in the gallbladder. It helps digest fat and carries waste, including bilirubin, into the gut.	FUNCTION
Bile acid sequestrant	A medicine, such as cholestyramine, that binds bile acids in the gut. It is commonly used to relieve the itching of cholestasis.	MEDICINE
Bile acids	Detergent-like molecules made from cholesterol in the liver. They help absorb fats and fat-soluble vitamins and are recycled through the gut and liver (enterohepatic circulation).	FUNCTION
Bile canaliculus	A tiny channel between neighboring liver cells where bile is first secreted. Canaliculi join to form bile ducts.	ANATOMY
Bile duct	A tube that carries bile from the liver to the small intestine. Intrahepatic ducts are inside the liver; the common bile duct lies outside it.	ANATOMY
Bile duct stricture	A narrowing of a bile duct caused by scarring, inflammation, injury, or tumor, which can block bile flow.	DISEASE
Biliary atresia	A newborn condition in which bile ducts outside the liver are blocked or missing. It causes persistent jaundice and pale stools, and needs early surgery (Kasai procedure) or transplant.	DISEASE
Biliary colic	Severe, steady upper right belly pain, often after a fatty meal, caused by a gallstone blocking a duct.	SYMPTOM
Biliary tree	The system of bile ducts inside and outside the liver, with the gallbladder, that carries bile to the intestine.	ANATOMY
Bilirubin	A yellow pigment made when old red blood cells break down. The liver attaches sugar to it (conjugation) so it can leave in bile. High levels cause jaundice.	TEST
Bilirubin, direct (conjugated)	Bilirubin that the liver has processed. A high direct level suggests a liver or bile duct problem, such as a blockage.	TEST
Bilirubin, indirect (unconjugated)	Bilirubin not yet processed by the liver. A high indirect level is seen with rapid red cell breakdown, Gilbert syndrome, and newborn jaundice.	TEST
Binge drinking	Drinking enough to raise blood alcohol to 0.08% in about two hours: usually 4 or more drinks for women and 5 or more for men.	NUTRITION
Biopsy, liver	A procedure that takes a tiny sample of liver tissue with a needle, to look at under a microscope. It shows the type and stage of liver disease.	PROCEDURE
Body mass index (BMI)	A number calculated from weight and height that estimates body fatness. It is a screening tool and does not distinguish muscle from fat.	NUTRITION
Bridge to transplant	Treatment that keeps a person well while waiting for a liver transplant, such as ablation or TACE for liver cancer, or care of complications.	TRANSPLANT
Bridging fibrosis	Scar tissue that forms bands linking portal tracts to each other or to central veins. It is advanced fibrosis (stage 3) just before cirrhosis.	PATHOLOGY
Budd-Chiari syndrome	A blockage of the hepatic veins that drain the liver, often from blood clots. It causes liver swelling, belly pain, and ascites.	DISEASE

C

Cantlie line	An imaginary line from the gallbladder fossa to the inferior vena cava that divides the functional right and left liver. The middle hepatic vein runs along it.	ANATOMY
Caput medusae	Swollen veins radiating from the navel, a sign of high pressure in the portal vein system.	SYMPTOM
Cardiac cirrhosis	Liver scarring from long-term congestion caused by right-sided heart failure. See Congestive hepatopathy.	DISEASE
Caroli disease	A rare inherited condition with widened bile ducts inside the liver, causing infection and stones. Often linked with congenital hepatic fibrosis and kidney cysts.	GENETIC
Carvedilol	A beta-blocker that also widens blood vessels; used to lower portal pressure in cirrhosis.	MEDICINE
Caudate lobe	A small lobe on the underside and back of the liver, between the inferior vena cava and the ligamentum venosum. It is segment 1 and drains directly into the vena cava.	ANATOMY
Celiac trunk	The first major branch of the abdominal aorta below the diaphragm. It gives rise to the hepatic, splenic, and left gastric arteries.	ANATOMY
Central vein	The small vein at the center of each liver lobule that collects blood from the sinusoids and drains into the hepatic veins.	ANATOMY
Ceruloplasmin	A copper-carrying blood protein. A low level, with other findings, raises suspicion for Wilson disease.	TEST
Child-Pugh score	A scoring system (classes A, B, C) that estimates the severity of cirrhosis from bilirubin, albumin, clotting time, ascites, and encephalopathy.	TEST
Cholangiocarcinoma	Cancer of the bile ducts. It can arise inside the liver (intrahepatic) or outside it (perihilar or distal). Also called bile duct cancer.	DISEASE
Cholangiocyte	A cell that lines the bile ducts and helps adjust the composition of bile.	ANATOMY
Cholangiogram	An image of the bile ducts, made with dye during ERCP or PTC, or with MRI (MRCP).	IMAGING
Cholangitis	Inflammation or infection of the bile ducts, often from a blockage. Acute cholangitis causes fever, jaundice, and belly pain and is an emergency.	DISEASE
Cholecystectomy	Surgery to remove the gallbladder, most often for gallstones, usually by laparoscopy.	PROCEDURE
Cholecystitis	Inflammation of the gallbladder, usually caused by a gallstone blocking the cystic duct.	DISEASE
Choledochal cyst	A rare widening of the bile duct, present from birth. It can cause pain, jaundice, infection, and raises cancer risk if not removed.	DISEASE
Choledocholithiasis	A gallstone in the common bile duct, which can cause jaundice, cholangitis, or pancreatitis.	DISEASE
Cholelithiasis	The presence of gallstones in the gallbladder.	DISEASE

Cholestasis	Reduced or blocked bile flow. It causes itching, jaundice, dark urine, pale stools, and high ALP and bilirubin.	DISEASE
Cholesterol	A fat-like substance made mostly in the liver and needed for cell membranes, hormones, and bile acids. Too much can build up in blood or in gallstones.	FUNCTION
Chronic hepatitis	Liver inflammation that lasts more than six months, caused by viruses, alcohol, autoimmune disease, or other causes.	DISEASE
Chronic liver disease	Long-term liver damage that may lead to fibrosis and cirrhosis. It can be silent for years.	DISEASE
Cirrhosis	Advanced scarring of the liver in which normal tissue is replaced by scar and nodules, distorting blood flow and function. It is a late stage of many liver diseases.	DISEASE
Cirrhosis, compensated	Cirrhosis without major complications. Many people live for years at this stage with good care.	DISEASE
Cirrhosis, decompensated	Cirrhosis with complications such as ascites, variceal bleeding, jaundice, or hepatic encephalopathy. Transplant evaluation is usually considered.	DISEASE
Clotting factors	Proteins, most made by the liver, that help blood clot. Several need vitamin K. Liver disease can lower them, causing easy bleeding.	FUNCTION
Coagulopathy	A problem with blood clotting that can cause easy bruising or bleeding. It is common in advanced liver disease.	SYMPTOM
Coffee	Regular coffee drinking is linked to a lower risk of liver scarring and liver cancer in studies. It is not a treatment, and does not replace other care.	NUTRITION
Collagen	The tough protein that makes up scar tissue. Activated stellate cells overproduce collagen in fibrosis.	PATHOLOGY
Collateral veins	Side-route veins that enlarge to carry blood around a blockage, such as in portal hypertension. See Varices.	ANATOMY
Common bile duct	The main duct that carries bile from the liver and gallbladder to the duodenum. Normal width is up to about 6 mm.	ANATOMY
Common hepatic duct	The duct formed where the right and left hepatic ducts join. It meets the cystic duct to form the common bile duct.	ANATOMY
Computed tomography (CT)	An X-ray test that makes cross-section pictures of the body. It shows liver shape, tumors, and blood vessels, often with contrast dye.	IMAGING
Congenital hepatic fibrosis	A rare inherited bile duct disorder with scarring around portal tracts, often causing portal hypertension while liver function stays fairly normal.	GENETIC
Congestive hepatopathy	Liver swelling and injury caused by blood backing up from heart failure or other conditions raising pressure in the hepatic veins.	DISEASE
Conjugation	A liver process that attaches sugars or other molecules to substances such as bilirubin, drugs, and hormones, making them water soluble so they can be removed.	FUNCTION
Contrast (dye)	A substance given by vein or mouth that makes organs and vessels show up more clearly on CT, MRI, or ultrasound.	IMAGING

Copper	A trace mineral the liver stores and removes in bile. Too much copper builds up in Wilson disease.	FUNCTION
Corticosteroids	Anti-inflammatory hormone medicines such as prednisone, used in autoimmune hepatitis and some severe alcohol-associated hepatitis.	MEDICINE
Couinaud segments	The eight functional segments of the liver, each with its own blood supply, bile drainage, and hepatic vein. Surgeons use them to plan operations.	ANATOMY
Crigler-Najjar syndrome	A rare inherited condition with little or no UGT1A1 enzyme, causing severe unconjugated jaundice in infancy.	GENETIC
Cryptogenic cirrhosis	Cirrhosis whose cause cannot be found. Many cases are later linked to fatty liver disease.	DISEASE
CT angiography	A CT scan with timed contrast that shows liver arteries and veins in detail, used before surgery and transplant.	IMAGING
Cyclosporine	An anti-rejection medicine (immunosuppressant) used after transplant.	MEDICINE
Cyst, hepatic	A fluid-filled sac in the liver. Simple cysts are common and usually harmless. See Polycystic liver disease.	DISEASE
Cystic duct	The short duct connecting the gallbladder to the common hepatic duct. It contains a spiral valve.	ANATOMY
Cytochrome P450 (CYP)	A large family of liver enzymes that break down many medicines and toxins. Differences in these enzymes explain drug interactions and side effects.	FUNCTION
Cytomegalovirus (CMV)	A common herpes-family virus that can cause hepatitis, especially in people with weak immune systems such as transplant recipients.	DISEASE

D

Decompensation	The point in cirrhosis when the liver can no longer cope and complications appear, such as ascites, bleeding varices, jaundice, or encephalopathy.	DISEASE
Delta hepatitis (hepatitis D)	A liver infection caused by the hepatitis D virus, which can only infect people who already have hepatitis B. It can speed up liver damage.	DISEASE
Detoxification	The liver process of changing drugs, alcohol, hormones, and toxins into forms that can be removed in bile or urine. Not the same as commercial "detox" products.	FUNCTION
Direct-acting antiviral (DAA)	Oral medicines that block hepatitis C virus and cure the infection in most people after 8 to 12 weeks of treatment.	MEDICINE
Diuretic	A "water pill" that helps the body lose salt and water. Spironolactone and furosemide are often used for ascites and swelling.	MEDICINE
Donation after circulatory death (DCD)	Organ donation after the heart has stopped beating, rather than after brain death. DCD livers carry a somewhat higher risk of bile duct problems.	TRANSPLANT
Donor, deceased	A person who has died and whose organs are donated for transplant. Organs come from donation after brain death or after circulatory death.	TRANSPLANT

Donor, living	A healthy person who donates part of their liver (or a kidney) to another person. The liver regrows in both donor and recipient.	TRANSPLANT
Doppler ultrasound	Ultrasound that measures blood flow. It checks the portal vein, hepatic veins, and hepatic artery.	IMAGING
Drug-induced liver injury (DILI)	Liver damage caused by a medicine, herbal product, or supplement. It can look like almost any liver disease and usually improves when the cause is stopped.	DISEASE
Dual blood supply	The liver receives blood from two sources: the portal vein (about 75%) and the hepatic artery (about 25%).	ANATOMY
Dubin-Johnson syndrome	A rare, harmless inherited condition in which the liver cannot release conjugated bilirubin well, causing mild jaundice.	GENETIC
Ductus venosus	A fetal blood vessel that lets blood bypass the liver. It closes after birth and becomes the ligamentum venosum.	ANATOMY
Duodenum	The first part of the small intestine, where bile and pancreatic juices enter through the ampulla of Vater.	ANATOMY
Dyslipidemia	Abnormal blood fats, such as high LDL cholesterol or triglycerides. It is common in fatty liver disease.	DISEASE

E

Edema	Swelling from extra fluid in tissues, often in the legs and feet in advanced liver disease because of low albumin and sodium retention.	SYMPTOM
Elastography	A test that measures liver stiffness, using vibration (FibroScan) or ultrasound or MRI, to estimate scarring (fibrosis) without a biopsy.	TEST
Elevated liver enzymes	Blood levels of ALT, AST, ALP, or GGT above the normal range. They signal liver or bile duct stress and need a cause to be found.	TEST
Embolization	A procedure that blocks a blood vessel, for example to cut off blood flow to a tumor or to stop bleeding. See TACE.	PROCEDURE
Encephalopathy, hepatic	Confusion, personality change, sleepiness, or coma caused by liver failure or blood bypassing the liver, allowing toxins such as ammonia to reach the brain.	DISEASE
Endoscopy, upper (EGD)	A test using a thin camera passed through the mouth to look at the esophagus, stomach, and upper intestine. Used to find and treat varices.	PROCEDURE
Endothelial cell, sinusoidal (LSEC)	A flat liver cell with tiny pores (fenestrae) lining the sinusoids. It lets plasma reach liver cells and clears waste molecules from blood.	ANATOMY
End-stage liver disease (ESLD)	Severe, irreversible liver failure in which transplant is often the only life-saving treatment.	DISEASE
Entecavir	An antiviral medicine that suppresses hepatitis B virus. See Nucleos(t)ide analogs.	MEDICINE
Enterohepatic circulation	The recycling of bile acids: they are secreted into the gut, absorbed in the last part of the small intestine, and returned to the liver through the portal vein.	FUNCTION

Enzyme	A protein that speeds up a chemical reaction in the body. Liver enzymes are measured in blood to detect injury.	FUNCTION
Epstein-Barr virus (EBV)	A common virus that causes mononucleosis and can inflame the liver.	DISEASE
ERCP (endoscopic retrograde cholangiopancreatography)	A procedure using an endoscope and dye to see and treat the bile and pancreatic ducts, for example to remove stones or place stents.	PROCEDURE
Esophageal varices	Swollen, fragile veins in the lower esophagus caused by portal hypertension. They can bleed heavily. See Variceal banding.	DISEASE
Exception points (MELD)	Extra priority points granted on the transplant list for conditions, such as liver cancer, where the MELD score understates the risk of dying.	TRANSPLANT
Exercise (for liver health)	Regular physical activity, about 150 minutes of moderate activity a week plus strength training, lowers liver fat and improves health even without weight loss.	NUTRITION
Extended-criteria donor liver	A donor liver with features (such as older age or fat) that carry a higher risk, used after careful matching to recipients who benefit.	TRANSPLANT

F

Falciform ligament	A sickle-shaped fold of peritoneum attaching the liver to the front abdominal wall and diaphragm. The ligamentum teres runs along its free edge.	ANATOMY
Fatty liver	A buildup of fat in liver cells. The most common form is metabolic dysfunction-associated steatotic liver disease (MASLD). See Steatosis.	DISEASE
Ferritin	A blood protein that stores iron. High levels can mean iron overload, inflammation, or liver disease.	TEST
FIB-4	A simple score using age, AST, ALT, and platelets that estimates the chance of advanced liver scarring without a biopsy.	TEST
Fibrinogen	A clotting protein made by the liver. Low levels can occur in severe liver disease.	FUNCTION
Fibrolamellar carcinoma	A rare liver cancer that affects teens and young adults who do not have cirrhosis.	DISEASE
FibroScan	A brand of transient elastography device that measures liver stiffness (and fat with CAP) in minutes, without needles.	TEST
Fibrosis	Scar tissue that forms when the liver is injured over time. Mild fibrosis can improve if the cause is treated; advanced fibrosis leads to cirrhosis.	PATHOLOGY
Fibrosis stage	A scale from F0 (none) to F4 (cirrhosis) describing how much scarring is present, measured by biopsy or noninvasive tests.	PATHOLOGY
Focal nodular hyperplasia (FNH)	A common benign liver lesion with a central scar. It rarely causes problems and usually needs no treatment.	DISEASE
Frailty	Loss of muscle, strength, and energy that raises the risk of falls, hospital stays, and poor outcomes in cirrhosis.	SYMPTOM
Fulminant hepatic failure	Another name for acute liver failure with very rapid onset.	DISEASE

Fundus (gallbladder)	The rounded bottom of the gallbladder, which often reaches the lower edge of the liver.	ANATOMY
FXR agonist	A type of medicine, such as obeticholic acid, that activates the farnesoid X receptor to change bile acid and fat metabolism. Used in some bile duct diseases.	MEDICINE
G		
Gallbladder	A pear-shaped sac under the liver that stores and concentrates bile and releases it after meals.	ANATOMY
Gallstones	Hard deposits, usually cholesterol or bilirubin, in the gallbladder or bile ducts. They may cause pain, infection, or pancreatitis.	DISEASE
Gamma-glutamyl transferase (GGT)	An enzyme in bile duct cells. A high GGT supports a liver origin for a high ALP and is raised by alcohol and many medicines.	TEST
Gastric varices	Swollen veins in the stomach wall from portal hypertension. They can bleed severely.	DISEASE
Genotype (hepatitis C)	The genetic type of a hepatitis C virus. Modern treatments work against all common genotypes.	TEST
Gilbert syndrome	A common, harmless inherited condition in which bilirubin is slightly high, sometimes with mild jaundice during fasting or illness.	GENETIC
Glisson capsule	The thin fibrous coat around the liver. It is rich in nerves, so stretching it causes the dull upper right ache of a swollen liver.	ANATOMY
Gluconeogenesis	The making of new glucose from non-sugar sources, such as amino acids, mainly in the liver, to keep blood sugar steady between meals.	FUNCTION
Glucuronidation	A conjugation step in which the liver attaches glucuronic acid to bilirubin, drugs, and hormones so they can be excreted.	FUNCTION
Glutathione	A liver antioxidant that helps neutralize toxins. It is depleted in acetaminophen overdose, which N-acetylcysteine helps replace.	FUNCTION
Glycogen	The stored form of sugar in the liver and muscles. The liver releases glucose from glycogen between meals.	FUNCTION
Glycogen storage disease	A group of inherited conditions in which the body cannot properly store or release glycogen, often affecting the liver and blood sugar.	GENETIC
Graft	The organ or part of an organ that is transplanted, such as the donor liver.	TRANSPLANT
Granuloma	A small cluster of immune cells seen under the microscope in certain liver diseases, such as sarcoidosis and primary biliary cholangitis.	PATHOLOGY
Gut-liver axis	The two-way connection between the intestines and liver. Gut bacteria, toxins, and nutrients reach the liver through the portal vein, and bile returns to the gut.	FUNCTION
Gynecomastia	Breast enlargement in men, common in cirrhosis because of hormone imbalance and certain medicines.	SYMPTOM

H		
HBV DNA	A blood test measuring the amount of hepatitis B virus (viral load).	TEST
HCV RNA	A blood test showing whether hepatitis C virus is present and how much. A negative result 12 weeks after treatment means cure (SVR).	TEST
HELLP syndrome	A serious pregnancy complication with hemolysis, elevated liver enzymes, and low platelets, usually late in pregnancy.	DISEASE
Hemangioma, hepatic	A common benign tumor made of blood vessels. Most are found by chance and need no treatment.	DISEASE
Hematemesis	Vomiting blood, often bright red or like coffee grounds. In liver disease it can signal variceal bleeding and is an emergency.	SYMPTOM
Hemochromatosis	An inherited condition in which the body absorbs too much iron, which builds up in the liver, heart, and pancreas. Treated by removing blood (phlebotomy).	GENETIC
Hemolysis	The breakdown of red blood cells. Rapid hemolysis raises bilirubin and can cause jaundice.	FUNCTION
Hepatectomy	Surgery to remove part of the liver, named by the part removed (for example right or left hepatectomy).	PROCEDURE
Hepatic	Relating to the liver, from the Greek hepar.	ANATOMY
Hepatic arterial buffer response	The liver's way of keeping blood flow steady: when portal vein flow falls, the hepatic artery widens to send more blood.	FUNCTION
Hepatic artery	The artery that brings oxygen-rich blood to the liver, about one quarter of its blood supply.	ANATOMY
Hepatic artery thrombosis	A blood clot in the hepatic artery, most dangerous in the first weeks after liver transplant because it can damage the bile ducts and the graft.	TRANSPLANT
Hepatic hydrothorax	Fluid in the space around the right lung caused by cirrhosis, from ascites passing through small holes in the diaphragm.	DISEASE
Hepatic osteodystrophy	Bone disease, such as osteoporosis, that develops in chronic liver disease.	DISEASE
Hepatic steatosis	See Steatosis.	PATHOLOGY
Hepatic stellate cell	See Stellate cell (hepatic).	ANATOMY
Hepatic vein	One of three main veins (right, middle, left) that carry blood from the liver to the inferior vena cava.	ANATOMY
Hepatic venous pressure gradient (HVPG)	A measurement of pressure in the liver veins, obtained by catheter. A value above 5 mmHg is abnormal and 10 mmHg or more is clinically significant portal hypertension.	TEST
Hepatitis	Inflammation of the liver, from viruses, alcohol, medicines, autoimmune disease, or other causes.	DISEASE
Hepatitis A	A liver infection caused by the hepatitis A virus, spread by contaminated food or water or close contact. It does not cause chronic infection and is prevented by vaccine.	DISEASE
Hepatitis B	A liver infection caused by the hepatitis B virus, spread by blood and body fluids. It can become chronic and lead to cirrhosis and cancer. Vaccine prevents it.	DISEASE

Hepatitis B core antibody (anti-HBc)	An antibody that shows a person has ever been infected with hepatitis B, past or current.	TEST
Hepatitis B e antigen (HBeAg)	A marker of active virus replication in chronic hepatitis B; a high level suggests high infectivity.	TEST
Hepatitis B surface antibody (anti-HBs)	An antibody showing immunity to hepatitis B, from vaccine or recovery from infection.	TEST
Hepatitis B surface antigen (HBsAg)	A protein on the hepatitis B virus. A positive test means current infection.	TEST
Hepatitis C	A liver infection caused by the hepatitis C virus, spread mostly by blood. It can be silent for decades and is now curable with direct-acting antivirals. No vaccine exists.	DISEASE
Hepatitis E	A liver infection caused by the hepatitis E virus, usually spread by contaminated water or undercooked pork. It is usually short-lived but can be serious in pregnancy.	DISEASE
Hepatoblastoma	A rare liver cancer in young children.	DISEASE
Hepatocellular carcinoma (HCC)	The most common primary liver cancer, starting in liver cells. It usually arises in people with cirrhosis and is watched for with regular ultrasound (surveillance).	DISEASE
Hepatocyte	The main liver cell, making up about 80% of liver volume. It makes proteins and bile, stores energy, and processes drugs and toxins.	ANATOMY
Hepatologist	A doctor who specializes in liver, gallbladder, bile duct, and pancreas diseases.	PEOPLE
Hepatoma	An older term for hepatocellular carcinoma.	DISEASE
Hepatomegaly	An enlarged liver, which can be caused by fat, hepatitis, heart failure, tumors, or other conditions.	SYMPTOM
Hepatopulmonary syndrome	A complication of advanced liver disease in which widened lung blood vessels lower blood oxygen, causing shortness of breath.	DISEASE
Hepatorenal syndrome (HRS)	Kidney failure that occurs in people with advanced liver disease and ascites, caused by changes in blood flow rather than kidney damage. See Terlipressin.	DISEASE
Hepatosplenomegaly	Enlargement of both the liver and the spleen.	SYMPTOM
Hepatotoxicity	Damage to the liver caused by a chemical, drug, or other substance.	DISEASE
HIDA scan (hepatobiliary scintigraphy)	A nuclear medicine scan using a tracer that is taken up by the liver and excreted in bile, to check bile flow and gallbladder emptying.	IMAGING
Histology	The study of tissue under the microscope, as in a liver biopsy report.	PATHOLOGY
Hyperammonemia	A high blood ammonia level, which can cause hepatic encephalopathy.	DISEASE
Hyperbilirubinemia	A high blood bilirubin level, causing jaundice when severe.	DISEASE
Hypersplenism	An overactive, enlarged spleen that traps and destroys blood cells, lowering platelets and white cells. Common in portal hypertension.	DISEASE
Hypoalbuminemia	A low blood albumin level, which can cause swelling and ascites.	DISEASE

Hyponatremia	A low blood sodium level, often from too much water relative to sodium in advanced cirrhosis.	SYMPTOM
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I

Icterus	Another word for jaundice, the yellowing of skin and eyes.	SYMPTOM
Immunosuppressants	Medicines that lower the immune system, used after transplant to prevent rejection and in autoimmune liver diseases. Examples include tacrolimus, mycophenolate, and steroids.	MEDICINE
Indirect bilirubin	See Bilirubin, indirect (unconjugated).	TEST
Inferior vena cava (IVC)	The large vein that carries blood from the lower body to the heart. The hepatic veins empty into it just below the diaphragm.	ANATOMY
INR (international normalized ratio)	A standardized clotting time. A high INR means blood takes longer to clot, often from liver disease or blood thinners, and it is part of the MELD score.	TEST
Insulin resistance	A state in which cells respond poorly to insulin. It drives fat buildup in the liver and is central to fatty liver disease.	FUNCTION
Interferon	An older injected medicine that boosts immune response to viruses. Largely replaced by oral antivirals for hepatitis C; peginterferon is still used in some hepatitis B care.	MEDICINE
Intrahepatic cholestasis of pregnancy (ICP)	A pregnancy condition with severe itching and raised bile acids, usually in the third trimester. It needs monitoring because of risks to the baby.	DISEASE
Iron overload	Too much iron in the body, from hemochromatosis or repeated transfusions, which can injure the liver.	DISEASE
Ischemic hepatitis	Sudden liver injury from a severe drop in blood flow or oxygen, often after shock or heart failure. Also called shock liver.	DISEASE

J

Jaundice	Yellow color of the skin and whites of the eyes caused by too much bilirubin in the blood.	SYMPTOM
Jaundice, hemolytic (prehepatic)	Jaundice caused by rapid breakdown of red blood cells, producing more bilirubin than the liver can handle.	SYMPTOM
Jaundice, hepatocellular	Jaundice caused by liver cell injury that impairs bilirubin processing, as in hepatitis and cirrhosis.	SYMPTOM
Jaundice, obstructive	Jaundice caused by a blocked bile duct, often with dark urine and pale stools.	SYMPTOM
Jugular vein	A large neck vein used as the access route for TIPS and transjugular liver biopsy.	PROCEDURE

K

Kasai procedure	A surgery for biliary atresia in which a loop of intestine is connected to the liver to drain bile. Best results come when done in the first weeks of life.	PROCEDURE
Kayser-Fleischer rings	Golden-brown rings at the edge of the cornea caused by copper deposits in Wilson disease.	SYMPTOM
Kernicterus	Brain injury in newborns from very high unconjugated bilirubin.	DISEASE

Klatskin tumor	A cholangiocarcinoma at the point where the right and left bile ducts join (perihilar).	DISEASE
Kupffer cell	A liver macrophage that sits in the sinusoids and removes bacteria, debris, and old red cells from blood.	ANATOMY
L		
Lactulose	A laxative sugar that lowers ammonia by speeding stool through the gut. The mainstay treatment for hepatic encephalopathy.	MEDICINE
Laparoscopy	Surgery through small cuts using a camera, used for gallbladder removal and some liver operations and biopsies.	PROCEDURE
Ligamentum teres	The round ligament of the liver, the scar of the fetal umbilical vein. It runs from the navel to the liver.	ANATOMY
Ligamentum venosum	The scar of the fetal ductus venosus, lying in a groove between the left lobe and the caudate lobe.	ANATOMY
Lipid	A fat or fat-like substance, such as cholesterol and triglycerides.	FUNCTION
Lipoprotein	A particle that carries fats in blood, such as LDL ("bad") and HDL ("good") cholesterol. The liver makes and clears many lipoproteins.	FUNCTION
LI-RADS	A standard scoring system that classifies liver lesions on CT or MRI in people at risk for liver cancer, from LR-1 (benign) to LR-5 (definitely cancer).	IMAGING
Liver	The largest solid organ inside the body, weighing about 3 pounds, in the upper right abdomen. It filters blood, makes bile and proteins, stores energy, and processes drugs.	ANATOMY
Liver cancer	Cancer that starts in the liver (hepatocellular carcinoma, cholangiocarcinoma) or spreads to it (metastasis). See those entries.	DISEASE
Liver enzymes	Proteins such as ALT, AST, ALP, and GGT that are measured in blood. Raised levels suggest liver injury or bile duct problems.	TEST
Liver fluke	A parasitic flatworm that infects the bile ducts, usually after eating raw freshwater fish or plants in some parts of the world.	DISEASE
Liver function tests (LFTs)	A group of blood tests (ALT, AST, ALP, GGT, bilirubin, albumin, INR) that show liver injury, bile flow, and synthetic function. Only some actually measure function.	TEST
Liver lobes	The four anatomic lobes: right, left, caudate, and quadrate. They differ from the functional Couinaud segments.	ANATOMY
Liver span	The vertical size of the liver measured by examination or ultrasound, typically about 7 to 12 cm at the midclavicular line.	TEST
Liver stiffness measurement (LSM)	The result of elastography, reported in kilopascals (kPa). Higher values suggest more scarring.	TEST
Liver transplant	Surgery that replaces a failing liver with a healthy liver from a deceased donor or part of a liver from a living donor.	TRANSPLANT
Living donor liver transplant (LDLT)	A transplant using part of a healthy person's liver. The right lobe is usually used for adults and the left lateral segment for children.	TRANSPLANT
Lobule	The classic hexagonal microscopic unit of the liver, with a central vein in the middle and portal tracts at the corners.	ANATOMY

Loop diuretic	A strong water pill such as furosemide, often combined with spironolactone to treat ascites.	MEDICINE
Lymph	A clear fluid the liver produces in large amounts. It drains through lymph vessels to the thoracic duct.	ANATOMY
M		
Magnetic resonance cholangiopancreatography (MRCP)	An MRI technique that shows the bile and pancreatic ducts without a scope or dye injection.	IMAGING
Magnetic resonance imaging (MRI)	An imaging test using magnets and radio waves, with no radiation, to show detail of the liver, fat, iron, and tumors.	IMAGING
Mallory-Denk bodies	Clumps of damaged protein seen in liver cells under the microscope, typical of alcohol-associated hepatitis and steatohepatitis.	PATHOLOGY
Malnutrition	Too little protein or energy, common in cirrhosis and linked to muscle loss and poor outcomes. Nutrition support is an important part of care.	DISEASE
MASH (metabolic dysfunction-associated steatohepatitis)	Fatty liver with inflammation and liver cell injury, which can lead to fibrosis and cirrhosis. Formerly called NASH.	DISEASE
MASLD (metabolic dysfunction-associated steatotic liver disease)	Fat buildup in the liver linked to excess weight, type 2 diabetes, and other metabolic risks. Formerly called NAFLD.	DISEASE
Mediterranean diet	An eating pattern rich in vegetables, fruit, whole grains, beans, fish, nuts, and olive oil. Linked to lower liver fat and better heart health.	NUTRITION
MELD score	A number from 6 to 40 calculated from bilirubin, INR, and creatinine (and sodium in MELD-Na) that estimates short-term risk of death and sets priority for liver transplant.	TEST
Melena	Black, tarry, foul-smelling stool caused by bleeding high in the digestive tract, such as from varices. It is an emergency.	SYMPTOM
Metabolic syndrome	A cluster of conditions, including large waist, high blood pressure, high blood sugar, and abnormal blood fats, that raises the risk of fatty liver and heart disease.	DISEASE
Metabolism	All the chemical processes that turn food into energy and building blocks, and break down drugs and waste. The liver is the body's main metabolic organ.	FUNCTION
MetALD	A category of steatotic liver disease in which metabolic risk factors and higher alcohol intake both contribute.	DISEASE
Metastasis, liver	Cancer that has spread to the liver from another organ, most often the colon. More common than cancer that starts in the liver.	DISEASE
Methotrexate	An immune-suppressing and cancer medicine that can injure the liver with long-term use, requiring regular monitoring.	MEDICINE
Microbiome	The community of bacteria and other microbes in the gut. It affects the liver through the portal vein.	FUNCTION

Midodrine	A medicine that raises blood pressure by tightening blood vessels, sometimes used for low blood pressure or refractory ascites in cirrhosis.	MEDICINE
Milk thistle	An herbal supplement (silymarin) often marketed for the liver. Evidence of benefit in liver disease is limited; ask your doctor before use.	NUTRITION
Mirizzi syndrome	A gallstone stuck in the gallbladder neck or cystic duct that presses on the common hepatic duct, causing jaundice.	DISEASE
Mitochondria	The energy-producing parts of cells. Liver cells contain thousands, which burn fat and help make urea.	FUNCTION
MRI-PDFF	An MRI technique that accurately measures the percentage of fat in the liver.	IMAGING
Mycophenolate	An anti-rejection medicine used after transplant and in some autoimmune liver diseases.	MEDICINE

N

N-acetylcysteine (NAC)	The antidote for acetaminophen overdose; it restores glutathione and protects the liver. Also studied in other liver injuries.	MEDICINE
Nadolol	A nonselective beta-blocker used to lower portal pressure and prevent variceal bleeding.	MEDICINE
NAFLD / NASH	Older names for fatty liver disease (nonalcoholic fatty liver disease) and its inflamed form (nonalcoholic steatohepatitis). Now called MASLD and MASH.	DISEASE
Necrosis	Death of cells or tissue. Liver cell necrosis can be scattered, patchy, or widespread (massive).	PATHOLOGY
Neonatal jaundice	Yellowing in newborns, common in the first week because the liver is still maturing. Jaundice lasting beyond two weeks or with pale stools needs evaluation.	SYMPTOM
Nodular regenerative hyperplasia	A rare liver condition with small regrowth nodules and no fibrous septa, which can cause portal hypertension.	DISEASE
Nodule (liver)	A rounded lump of liver tissue. In cirrhosis, regenerative nodules are surrounded by scar; some nodules may become dysplastic or cancer.	PATHOLOGY
Nonselective beta-blocker (NSBB)	A beta-blocker, such as propranolol, nadolol, or carvedilol, that lowers portal vein pressure.	MEDICINE
Normothermic machine perfusion	A method of keeping a donor liver warm and supplied with blood-like fluid outside the body before transplant, to assess and improve the organ.	TRANSPLANT
NSAIDs	Nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory drugs such as ibuprofen and naproxen. They can cause bleeding and kidney injury and are often avoided in cirrhosis.	MEDICINE
Nucleos(t)ide analogs	Oral antiviral medicines, such as entecavir and tenofovir, that suppress hepatitis B virus and protect the liver.	MEDICINE
Nutrition support	Dietary and supplement plans to prevent malnutrition, including small frequent meals, enough protein, and a late-evening snack in cirrhosis.	NUTRITION

O

Obesity	A chronic disease of excess body fat. A major driver of fatty liver disease.	DISEASE
Obeticholic acid	A medicine that activates the FXR receptor, used in some people with primary biliary cholangitis. It requires careful monitoring in cirrhosis.	MEDICINE
Occult hepatitis B	Hepatitis B virus DNA in the liver even when the blood surface antigen test is negative. It can reactivate with immune suppression.	DISEASE
Octreotide	A medicine that lowers pressure in portal vein vessels, used with endoscopy to treat variceal bleeding.	MEDICINE
OPTN / UNOS	The Organ Procurement and Transplantation Network, run by the United Network for Organ Sharing, which manages the national transplant waiting list and organ matching in the United States.	TRANSPLANT
Organ procurement organization (OPO)	A regional group that works with hospitals and families to recover organs from donors and deliver them to transplant centers.	TRANSPLANT
Orthotopic liver transplant	Placing the donor liver in the same position as the diseased liver, after removing the old one.	TRANSPLANT
Overlap syndrome	Features of more than one autoimmune liver disease at the same time, such as autoimmune hepatitis with primary biliary cholangitis.	DISEASE
Oxidative stress	Cell injury from unstable molecules called free radicals. A contributor to liver damage from alcohol, fat, and toxins.	FUNCTION

P

Pale stools	Light, clay-colored stool from lack of bile pigment reaching the gut, a sign of bile duct blockage.	SYMPTOM
Palliative care	Specialized care that relieves symptoms and stress of serious illness at any stage, alongside other treatment. It supports patients and families.	PROCEDURE
Pancreatic duct	The duct that carries pancreatic juice to the duodenum, usually joining the common bile duct at the ampulla.	ANATOMY
Paracentesis	A procedure that removes fluid from the belly with a needle, to relieve ascites or to test the fluid for infection.	PROCEDURE
Parenchyma	The working tissue of an organ. In the liver, it is the plates of hepatocytes.	ANATOMY
Peliosis hepatis	A rare condition with blood-filled spaces in the liver, linked to some medicines, infections, and steroids.	DISEASE
Percutaneous transhepatic cholangiography (PTC)	A procedure in which a needle is passed through the skin into a bile duct, to image or drain the bile ducts when ERCP is not possible.	PROCEDURE
Pericentral	Near the central vein. Another name for zone 3 of the liver acinus.	ANATOMY
Perihilar	Around the hilum (porta hepatis) of the liver, where the main bile ducts and vessels enter.	ANATOMY

Periportal	Near the portal tract. Another name for zone 1 of the liver acinus.	ANATOMY
Peritoneum	The thin membrane lining the abdomen and covering organs, including most of the liver.	ANATOMY
Phlebotomy	Removing blood from a vein. Used regularly to lower iron in hemochromatosis.	PROCEDURE
Platelets	Blood cells that help clotting. A low platelet count can be an early sign of portal hypertension and an enlarged spleen.	TEST
Polycystic liver disease	An inherited condition with many cysts in the liver, often seen with polycystic kidney disease. Usually mild, but large cysts can cause symptoms.	GENETIC
Porphyria	A group of rare inherited or acquired disorders of heme production that can affect the liver and skin.	GENETIC
Porta hepatis	The "gateway" groove on the underside of the liver where the portal vein, hepatic artery, and bile ducts enter and leave.	ANATOMY
Portal hypertension	High pressure in the portal vein system, most often from cirrhosis. It causes varices, ascites, and an enlarged spleen.	DISEASE
Portal hypertensive gastropathy	Congested, fragile stomach lining from portal hypertension that can cause slow bleeding and anemia.	DISEASE
Portal triad (portal tract)	A bundle of a portal vein branch, a hepatic artery branch, and a bile duct, with lymph vessels and nerves, found at the corners of liver lobules.	ANATOMY
Portal vein	The large vein that carries nutrient-rich blood from the intestines, spleen, and pancreas to the liver. It supplies about 75% of the liver's blood.	ANATOMY
Portal vein thrombosis	A blood clot in the portal vein, which can cause portal hypertension and belly pain. Common in cirrhosis and clotting disorders.	DISEASE
Portosystemic shunt	An abnormal or surgically made connection that lets portal blood bypass the liver and flow directly into the general circulation. See TIPS.	ANATOMY
Primary biliary cholangitis (PBC)	A chronic autoimmune disease that slowly destroys small bile ducts in the liver, causing itching, fatigue, and eventually cirrhosis. Treated with ursodiol.	DISEASE
Primary sclerosing cholangitis (PSC)	A chronic disease that inflames and scars bile ducts inside and outside the liver. Often linked to inflammatory bowel disease and raises cancer risk.	DISEASE
Pringle maneuver	Temporary clamping of the portal triad during liver surgery to control bleeding.	PROCEDURE
Probiotics	Live bacteria in foods or supplements that may benefit the gut. Evidence for liver disease is limited; ask your care team.	NUTRITION
Progenitor cells	Immature cells near the small bile ducts that can become hepatocytes or cholangiocytes when liver cells cannot regenerate.	FUNCTION
Progressive familial intrahepatic cholestasis (PFIC)	A group of rare inherited conditions that impair bile flow in children, causing severe itching and liver damage.	GENETIC

Propranolol	A nonselective beta-blocker used to lower portal pressure and prevent variceal bleeding.	MEDICINE
Protein (dietary)	A nutrient needed to build and repair muscle. People with cirrhosis often need more, not less, protein, unless told otherwise.	NUTRITION
Prothrombin time (PT)	A test of how long blood takes to clot. It is used to calculate the INR and reflects the liver's production of clotting factors.	TEST
Pruritus	Itching. Severe itching is common in cholestatic liver diseases such as PBC and PSC.	SYMPTOM

Q

Quadrate lobe	A small lobe on the underside of the liver between the gallbladder and the ligamentum teres, part of segment 4b.	ANATOMY
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R

Radioembolization (Y-90)	A treatment that delivers tiny radioactive beads (yttrium-90) into the artery feeding a liver tumor.	PROCEDURE
Radiofrequency ablation (RFA)	A type of ablation that uses heat from radio waves delivered through a needle to destroy small liver tumors.	PROCEDURE
Reference range	The range of values seen in most healthy people for a test. It differs by laboratory, age, and sex.	TEST
Regeneration	The liver's ability to regrow after injury or surgery. A healthy liver can regain lost volume within weeks to months.	FUNCTION
Rejection	When the immune system attacks a transplanted organ. It is often treatable if caught early with changes in anti-rejection medicines.	TRANSPLANT
Resection, liver	Surgical removal of part of the liver, for example to treat a tumor.	PROCEDURE
Resmetirom	A liver-directed medicine approved for adults with MASH and moderate to advanced fibrosis.	MEDICINE
Reye syndrome	A rare, serious illness in children with liver and brain injury, linked to aspirin use during viral infections.	DISEASE
Riedel lobe	A normal variant: a tongue-shaped downward extension of the right lobe that can feel like an enlarged liver.	ANATOMY
Rifaximin	An antibiotic that stays in the gut and reduces ammonia-producing bacteria. Used to prevent hepatic encephalopathy from returning.	MEDICINE
Rotor syndrome	A rare, harmless inherited condition with mild jaundice from impaired bilirubin uptake.	GENETIC
Roux-en-Y hepaticojejunostomy	A surgery connecting the bile duct to a loop of small intestine to drain bile, used after injury, for some transplants, and for bile duct disease.	PROCEDURE

My notes

S

Sarcopenia	Loss of muscle mass and strength, common in cirrhosis. It is linked to falls, infections, and poorer outcomes.	SYMPTOM
Schistosomiasis	A parasitic infection from freshwater snails that can scar the liver and cause portal hypertension in parts of the world where it is common.	DISEASE
Sclerotherapy	Injecting a chemical into varices to shrink them. Now less common than banding.	PROCEDURE
Segment (liver)	One of eight functional divisions of the liver, each with its own blood supply and bile drainage. See Couinaud segments.	ANATOMY
Segmentectomy	Surgery to remove one liver segment.	PROCEDURE
Serology	Blood tests that detect antibodies or antigens, used for viral hepatitis and autoimmune liver disease.	TEST
Serum-ascites albumin gradient (SAAG)	The difference between albumin in blood and in ascitic fluid. A value of 1.1 g/dL or more suggests the ascites is due to portal hypertension.	TEST
Shunt	A passage that diverts blood or fluid from one area to another. See TIPS and Portosystemic shunt.	PROCEDURE
Sinusoid	A wide, leaky capillary between rows of liver cells where blood from the portal vein and hepatic artery mixes and is processed.	ANATOMY
Sinusoidal obstruction syndrome (SOS)	Injury and blockage of the small liver veins, for example after stem cell transplant or some chemotherapy. Also called veno-occlusive disease.	DISEASE
Smooth muscle antibody (SMA)	An autoantibody often positive in type 1 autoimmune hepatitis.	TEST
Sodium restriction	Limiting salt, usually to about 2,000 mg of sodium a day, to reduce ascites and swelling in cirrhosis.	NUTRITION
Sphincter of Oddi	The muscle around the ampulla of Vater that controls the flow of bile and pancreatic juice into the duodenum.	ANATOMY
Sphincterotomy	A cut in the sphincter of Oddi, done during ERCP, to widen the opening and let stones or bile pass.	PROCEDURE
Spider angioma	A small red spot with thin radiating lines on the skin, most often on the upper body. Common in cirrhosis.	SYMPTOM
Spironolactone	A water pill (aldosterone blocker) and the main diuretic for ascites in cirrhosis. It can raise potassium.	MEDICINE
Splenic vein	The vein that carries blood from the spleen and joins the superior mesenteric vein to form the portal vein.	ANATOMY
Splenomegaly	An enlarged spleen, often from portal hypertension. It can lower platelet counts.	SYMPTOM
Split liver transplant	Dividing one deceased-donor liver between two recipients, often a child and an adult.	TRANSPLANT
Spontaneous bacterial peritonitis (SBP)	An infection of ascitic fluid in people with cirrhosis, without a clear source. It causes fever and belly pain and needs urgent antibiotics.	DISEASE
Standard drink	About 14 grams of pure alcohol: 12 ounces of regular beer, 5 ounces of wine, or 1.5 ounces of spirits.	NUTRITION

Statins	Cholesterol-lowering medicines. They are generally safe in fatty liver disease and protect the heart; they can be used in most people with liver disease under a doctor's guidance.	MEDICINE
Steatohepatitis	Fatty liver with inflammation and liver cell damage. See MASH and Alcohol-associated hepatitis.	DISEASE
Steatosis	Fat accumulation in liver cells, seen on imaging or biopsy when fat exceeds about 5% of liver weight.	PATHOLOGY
Steatotic liver disease (SLD)	The umbrella term for fatty liver conditions, including MASLD, MetALD, and alcohol-associated liver disease.	DISEASE
Stellate cell (hepatic)	A cell in the space of Disse that stores vitamin A. When activated by injury, it makes scar tissue (collagen).	ANATOMY
Stent	A small tube placed in a duct or blood vessel to keep it open, as in bile duct blockage or TIPS.	PROCEDURE
Superior mesenteric vein (SMV)	The vein that drains the small intestine and right colon. It joins the splenic vein to form the portal vein.	ANATOMY
Support group	A regular gathering of people with a shared experience for mutual help and encouragement. TLHF offers liver and kidney support groups.	PEOPLE
Surveillance (HCC)	Regular screening, usually a liver ultrasound every 6 months with or without AFP, in people with cirrhosis or high-risk hepatitis B to find liver cancer early.	TEST
Sustained virologic response (SVR)	No detectable hepatitis C virus 12 weeks or more after finishing treatment. It is considered a cure.	TEST

T

Tacrolimus	An anti-rejection medicine (immunosuppressant) used after transplant. Blood levels are checked often; many drugs and foods, such as grapefruit, interact with it.	MEDICINE
Tenofovir	An antiviral used to suppress hepatitis B virus and in HIV treatment. See Nucleos(t)ide analogs.	MEDICINE
Terlipressin	A medicine that narrows abdominal blood vessels and improves kidney blood flow, used to treat hepatorenal syndrome.	MEDICINE
Thrombocytopenia	A low platelet count, common in advanced liver disease with an enlarged spleen. It can cause easy bruising and bleeding.	SYMPTOM
Thrombosis	A blood clot that blocks a vessel. Liver conditions can cause clots in the portal or hepatic veins.	DISEASE
TIPS (transjugular intrahepatic portosystemic shunt)	A procedure that places a stent inside the liver between a hepatic vein and the portal vein to lower portal pressure. Used for bleeding varices and refractory ascites.	PROCEDURE
Total bilirubin	The sum of direct and indirect bilirubin in blood.	TEST
Toxin	A poison that can injure the liver, such as some mushrooms, solvents, and chemicals.	DISEASE
Transaminases	The enzymes ALT and AST, which rise when liver cells are injured.	TEST
Transarterial chemoembolization (TACE)	A treatment for liver tumors in which chemotherapy and blocking particles are injected into the artery feeding the tumor.	PROCEDURE

Transient elastography	The technique used by FibroScan to measure liver stiffness with a painless vibration and ultrasound pulse.	TEST
Transjugular liver biopsy	A liver biopsy done through a neck vein, used when there is ascites or a clotting problem that makes a needle through the skin unsafe.	PROCEDURE
Transplant center	A hospital program that evaluates patients, performs transplants, and provides long-term follow-up.	TRANSPLANT
Transplant evaluation	A set of tests and meetings to decide whether a person is healthy enough and in need of a transplant, including medical, surgical, social, and financial review.	TRANSPLANT
Transplant list (waiting list)	The national list of people waiting for an organ. Liver candidates are ranked by medical urgency, mainly the MELD score, rather than by waiting time.	TRANSPLANT
Triglycerides	A type of fat in blood. High levels are common in fatty liver disease.	TEST
Triple-phase CT	A CT scan with images before contrast and in arterial and portal venous phases, used to characterize liver lesions.	IMAGING
Tumor markers	Substances in blood, such as AFP and CA 19-9, that can be raised by some cancers. They are not specific and are used with imaging.	TEST
Turmeric (curcumin)	A spice and supplement. High-dose curcumin pills have been linked to liver injury; ask before using supplements.	NUTRITION
Type 2 diabetes	A condition of high blood sugar from insulin resistance. It raises the risk of fatty liver disease, cirrhosis, and liver cancer.	DISEASE
Tyrosinemia	A rare inherited metabolic disease that can damage the liver in infancy, treated with medicine and diet.	GENETIC

U

UGT1A1	The liver enzyme that conjugates bilirubin. Reduced activity causes Gilbert and Crigler-Najjar syndromes.	GENETIC
Ultra-processed foods	Industrial foods high in added sugar, refined starch, fat, and salt. A high intake is linked to fatty liver disease.	NUTRITION
Ultrasound	Imaging using sound waves. See Abdominal ultrasound and Doppler ultrasound.	IMAGING
Umbilical vein	A fetal vein bringing blood from the placenta to the liver. After birth it closes and becomes the ligamentum teres.	ANATOMY
Unconjugated bilirubin	See Bilirubin, indirect.	TEST
Urea cycle	The liver pathway that turns toxic ammonia into urea, which the kidneys remove in urine.	FUNCTION
Urine, dark	Tea- or cola-colored urine from bilirubin spilling into urine. A common sign of jaundice and liver or bile duct disease.	SYMPTOM
Urobilinogen	A breakdown product of bilirubin made in the gut. It can be measured in urine and gives stool its brown color.	TEST
Ursodiol (UDCA)	A bile acid medicine used to treat primary biliary cholangitis and dissolve some gallstones.	MEDICINE

V

Vaccination (liver-related)	Hepatitis A and hepatitis B vaccines prevent those infections. People with chronic liver disease should also stay current on flu, COVID-19, and pneumonia vaccines.	MEDICINE
Vanishing bile duct syndrome	Loss of small bile ducts from immune or drug injury, causing cholestasis.	DISEASE
Variceal banding	A procedure in which small rubber bands are placed around esophageal varices through an endoscope to stop or prevent bleeding.	PROCEDURE
Variceal bleeding	Bleeding from varices, causing vomiting of blood or black stools. It is an emergency.	DISEASE
Varices	Swollen veins, most often in the esophagus or stomach, that can bleed. They are caused by portal hypertension.	DISEASE
Veno-occlusive disease	See Sinusoidal obstruction syndrome.	DISEASE
Vibrio vulnificus	A bacterium in warm seawater and raw shellfish that can cause life-threatening infection in people with cirrhosis or iron overload.	DISEASE
Viral hepatitis	Liver inflammation caused by hepatitis viruses A, B, C, D, or E, and sometimes other viruses.	DISEASE
Viral load	The amount of virus in the blood. Falling viral load shows treatment is working.	TEST
Vitamin A	A fat-soluble vitamin stored in liver stellate cells. Very high doses can injure the liver.	NUTRITION
Vitamin D	A fat-soluble vitamin that the liver helps activate. Deficiency is common in chronic liver disease.	NUTRITION
Vitamin E	An antioxidant vitamin sometimes used in selected adults with MASH without diabetes or cirrhosis. Use only under medical advice.	NUTRITION
Vitamin K	A vitamin needed to make several clotting factors. Low levels from poor bile flow or diet can cause bleeding.	NUTRITION
VLDL	Very-low-density lipoprotein, a particle the liver makes to send triglycerides into the blood.	FUNCTION

W

Waiting list	See Transplant list.	TRANSPLANT
Warm ischemia	The time a donor organ is without blood flow at body temperature, which can harm the organ.	TRANSPLANT
Weight loss (for fatty liver)	Losing 5% of body weight lowers liver fat; 7 to 10% improves inflammation; 10% or more can improve fibrosis in many people.	NUTRITION
West Haven criteria	A scale of grades 1 to 4 describing the severity of hepatic encephalopathy, from mild confusion to coma.	TEST
Wilson disease	An inherited condition in which copper builds up in the liver and brain. Treated with medicines that remove copper, or with transplant for severe cases.	GENETIC
Withdrawal, alcohol	The shaking, sweating, anxiety, and sometimes seizures or delirium that can occur when a heavy drinker stops suddenly. It	DISEASE

can be life threatening and needs medical care.

X

Xanthelasma	Yellowish fatty patches around the eyelids, seen with high cholesterol and some cholestatic diseases.	SYMPTOM
Xanthoma	Yellowish fatty skin bumps from cholesterol deposits, seen in long-standing cholestasis such as PBC.	SYMPTOM
Xenobiotic	A foreign chemical, such as a drug or toxin, that the liver works to break down and remove.	FUNCTION

Y

Yellow fever	A viral disease spread by mosquitoes in parts of Africa and South America that can injure the liver and cause jaundice. A vaccine prevents it.	DISEASE
Yttrium-90 (Y-90)	The radioactive material used in radioembolization. See Radioembolization.	PROCEDURE

Z

Zieve syndrome	A rare condition in heavy drinkers with hemolytic anemia, high blood fats, and jaundice.	DISEASE
Zinc	A trace mineral often low in cirrhosis. Low zinc may worsen taste changes and hepatic encephalopathy; supplements should be guided by your care team.	NUTRITION
Zonation	The way liver cells in different zones of a lobule do different jobs depending on their distance from incoming blood.	FUNCTION
Zone 1 (periportal)	The part of the liver acinus nearest the portal tract, with the most oxygen and nutrients. Makes glucose, urea, and bile acids.	ANATOMY
Zone 2 (midzonal)	The middle part of the liver acinus.	ANATOMY
Zone 3 (pericentral)	The part of the liver acinus nearest the central vein, with the least oxygen. It does much of the drug and alcohol metabolism and is most vulnerable to low blood flow and toxins.	ANATOMY

PART 2

Reference Sections

Common abbreviations and acronyms

ACLF	Acute-on-chronic liver failure	IVC	Inferior vena cava
AFP	Alpha-fetoprotein	kPa	Kilopascals (unit of liver stiffness)
ALD	Alcohol-associated liver disease	LDLT	Living donor liver transplant
ALF	Acute liver failure	LFTs	Liver function tests
ALP	Alkaline phosphatase	LI-RADS	Liver Imaging Reporting and Data System
ALT	Alanine aminotransferase	LSM	Liver stiffness measurement
AMA	Anti-mitochondrial antibody	MASH	Metabolic dysfunction-associated steatohepatitis
ANA	Antinuclear antibody	MASLD	Metabolic dysfunction-associated steatotic liver disease
anti-HBc / anti-HBs	Hepatitis B core antibody / surface antibody	MELD	Model for End-Stage Liver Disease
AST	Aspartate aminotransferase	MetALD	Metabolic dysfunction and alcohol-associated liver disease
AUD	Alcohol use disorder	MRCP	Magnetic resonance cholangiopancreatography
BMI	Body mass index	MRI	Magnetic resonance imaging
CAP	Controlled attenuation parameter (FibroScan fat score)	MRI-PDFF	MRI proton density fat fraction
CBD	Common bile duct	NAC	N-acetylcysteine
CMV	Cytomegalovirus	NAFLD / NASH	Older names for MASLD / MASH
CT	Computed tomography	NIT	Noninvasive test
DAA	Direct-acting antiviral	NSAID	Nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory drug
DBD / DCD	Donation after brain death / after circulatory death	NSBB	Nonselective beta-blocker
DILI	Drug-induced liver injury	OPO	Organ procurement organization
EBV	Epstein-Barr virus	OPTN	Organ Procurement and Transplantation Network
EGD	Esophagogastroduodenoscopy (upper endoscopy)	PBC	Primary biliary cholangitis
ERCP	Endoscopic retrograde cholangiopancreatography	PFIC	Progressive familial intrahepatic cholestasis
ESLD	End-stage liver disease	PSC	Primary sclerosing cholangitis
FIB-4	Fibrosis-4 index	PT	Prothrombin time
FNH	Focal nodular hyperplasia	PTC	Percutaneous transhepatic cholangiography
GGT	Gamma-glutamyl transferase	PVT	Portal vein thrombosis
HBeAg	Hepatitis B e antigen	RFA	Radiofrequency ablation
HBsAg	Hepatitis B surface antigen	SAAG	Serum-ascites albumin gradient

HBV	Hepatitis B virus	SBP	Spontaneous bacterial peritonitis
HCC	Hepatocellular carcinoma	SLD	Steatotic liver disease
HCV	Hepatitis C virus	SMA	Smooth muscle antibody; also superior mesenteric artery
HDV	Hepatitis D virus	SMV	Superior mesenteric vein
HE	Hepatic encephalopathy	SOS	Sinusoidal obstruction syndrome
HEV	Hepatitis E virus	SVR	Sustained virologic response
HIDA	Hepatobiliary iminodiacetic acid scan	TACE	Transarterial chemoembolization
HRS	Hepatorenal syndrome	TIPS	Transjugular intrahepatic portosystemic shunt
HVPG	Hepatic venous pressure gradient	UDCA	Ursodeoxycholic acid (ursodiol)
IBD	Inflammatory bowel disease	UNOS	United Network for Organ Sharing
ICP	Intrahepatic cholestasis of pregnancy	VLDL	Very-low-density lipoprotein
INR	International normalized ratio	Y-90	Yttrium-90

Word parts: how to decode liver terms

Most medical words are built from small pieces. Learning a few makes many terms easier to understand.

Word part	Meaning	Examples
hepat-, hepato-	liver	hepatitis, hepatocyte
-itis	inflammation	hepatitis, cholangitis
-osis	abnormal condition	cirrhosis, steatosis
-ectomy	surgical removal	hepatectomy, cholecystectomy
-megaly	enlargement	hepatomegaly, splenomegaly
-pathy	disease	encephalopathy, gastropathy
-emia	in the blood	hyperbilirubinemia, hypoalbuminemia
hyper- / hypo-	too high / too low	hyperammonemia, hyponatremia
chol-, cholo-	bile	cholestasis, cholangitis
cholecyst-	gallbladder	cholecystitis
angio-, -angi-	vessel or duct	cholangiogram, angiography
-gram, -graphy	picture, imaging	cholangiography
-scopy	looking inside with a scope	endoscopy, laparoscopy
-ostomy, -otomy	making an opening / cutting	sphincterotomy, hepaticojejunostomy
-plasty	repair or reshaping	biliary plasty
steato-	fat	steatosis, steatohepatitis
ascit-	fluid in the belly	ascites
icter-	yellow	icterus
porto-, portal	portal vein	portosystemic, portal hypertension
-lith-	stone	cholelithiasis, choledocholithiasis
-penia	too few	thrombocytopenia

Word part	Meaning	Examples
coagul-	clotting	coagulopathy
-toxic, toxi-	poisonous	hepatotoxicity
hem-, hemo-	blood	hemolysis, hematemesis
nephro-, reno-	kidney	hepatorenal
pulmo-	lung	hepatopulmonary
encephalo-	brain	encephalopathy
melan-, mel-	black	melena
trans-	across or through	transjugular, transplant
peri-	around	periportal, perihilar

Liver tests at a glance

Normal ranges differ by laboratory, age, and sex, so ask your care team what is normal for you. A single test rarely tells the whole story.

Test	What it reflects	Good to know
ALT	Liver cell injury	Rises with hepatitis, fatty liver, medicines, and alcohol.
AST	Liver, muscle, and heart injury	AST higher than ALT is common in alcohol-related disease and cirrhosis.
ALP	Bile duct and bone	Rises with cholestasis and bile duct blockage.
GGT	Bile duct cells and alcohol effect	Helps show a high ALP comes from the liver.
Bilirubin	Bile flow and liver processing	Causes jaundice when high.
Albumin	Liver protein production	Falls in advanced disease, malnutrition, and protein loss.
INR / PT	Clotting factor production	Rises with poor liver function or blood thinners.
Platelets	Clotting cells; spleen size	Low in portal hypertension.
Ammonia	Waste product of protein	May be high in encephalopathy; levels do not always match symptoms.
AFP	Liver cancer marker	Used with ultrasound to watch for HCC; can be falsely raised.
HBsAg, anti-HBs, anti-HBc	Hepatitis B status	Shows infection, immunity, or past exposure.
HCV antibody, HCV RNA	Hepatitis C infection	RNA shows whether the virus is active.
FIB-4, elastography	Amount of scarring	Noninvasive ways to estimate fibrosis stage.
Ultrasound, CT, MRI	Liver shape, fat, masses, vessels	Show structure; each has strengths.

Terms by category

Use these lists to explore related terms. Look up any name in the A to Z section.

Anatomy (59 terms)

Acinus · Ampulla of Vater · Bare area · Bile canaliculus · Bile duct · Biliary tree · Cantlie line · Caudate lobe · Celiac trunk · Central vein · Cholangiocyte · Collateral veins · Common bile duct · Common hepatic duct · Couinaud segments · Cystic duct · Dual blood supply · Ductus venosus · Duodenum · Endothelial cell, sinusoidal (LSEC) · Falciform ligament · Fundus (gallbladder) · Gallbladder · Glisson capsule · Hepatic · Hepatic artery · Hepatic stellate cell · Hepatic vein · Hepatocyte · Inferior vena cava (IVC) · Kupffer cell · Ligamentum teres · Ligamentum venosum · Liver · Liver lobes · Lobule · Lymph · Pancreatic duct · Parenchyma · Pericentral · Perihilar · Periportal · Peritoneum · Porta hepatis · Portal triad (portal tract) · Portal vein · Portosystemic shunt · Quadrate lobe · Riedel lobe · Segment (liver) · Sinusoid · Sphincter of Oddi · Splenic vein · Stellate cell (hepatic) · Superior mesenteric vein (SMV) · Umbilical vein · Zone 1 (periportal) · Zone 2 (midzonal) · Zone 3 (pericentral)

Function (32 terms)

Ammonia · Bile · Bile acids · Cholesterol · Clotting factors · Conjugation · Copper · Cytochrome P450 (CYP) · Detoxification · Enterohepatic circulation · Enzyme · Fibrinogen · Gluconeogenesis · Glucuronidation · Glutathione · Glycogen · Gut-liver axis · Hemolysis · Hepatic arterial buffer response · Insulin resistance · Lipid · Lipoprotein · Metabolism · Microbiome · Mitochondria · Oxidative stress · Progenitor cells · Regeneration · Urea cycle · VLDL · Xenobiotic · Zonation

Disease (108 terms)

Abscess, liver · Acetaminophen toxicity · Acute hepatitis · Acute liver failure · Acute-on-chronic liver failure (ACLF) · Adenoma, hepatic · Aflatoxin · Alcohol use disorder (AUD) · Alcohol-associated hepatitis · Alcohol-associated liver disease (ALD) · Amebic liver abscess · Autoimmune hepatitis · Bile duct stricture · Biliary atresia · Budd-Chiari syndrome · Cardiac cirrhosis · Cholangiocarcinoma · Cholangitis · Cholecystitis · Choledochal cyst · Choledocholithiasis · Cholelithiasis · Cholestasis · Chronic hepatitis · Chronic liver disease · Cirrhosis · Cirrhosis, compensated · Cirrhosis, decompensated · Congestive hepatopathy · Cryptogenic cirrhosis · Cyst, hepatic · Cytomegalovirus (CMV) · Decompensation · Delta hepatitis (hepatitis D) · Drug-induced liver injury (DILI) · Dyslipidemia · Encephalopathy, hepatic · End-stage liver disease (ESLD) · Epstein-Barr virus (EBV) · Esophageal varices · Fatty liver · Fibrolamellar carcinoma · Focal nodular hyperplasia (FNH) · Fulminant hepatic failure · Gallstones · Gastric varices · HELLP syndrome · Hemangioma, hepatic · Hepatic hydrothorax · Hepatic osteodystrophy · Hepatitis · Hepatitis A · Hepatitis B · Hepatitis C · Hepatitis E · Hepatoblastoma · Hepatocellular carcinoma (HCC) · Hepatoma · Hepatopulmonary syndrome · Hepatorenal syndrome (HRS) · Hepatotoxicity · Hyperammonemia · Hyperbilirubinemia · Hypersplenism · Hypoalbuminemia · Intrahepatic cholestasis of pregnancy (ICP) · Iron overload · Ischemic hepatitis · Kernicterus · Klatskin tumor · Liver cancer · Liver fluke · Malnutrition · MASH (metabolic dysfunction-associated steatohepatitis) · MASLD (metabolic dysfunction-associated steatotic liver disease) · Metabolic syndrome · MetALD · Metastasis, liver · Mirizzi syndrome · NAFLD / NASH · Nodular regenerative hyperplasia · Obesity · Occult hepatitis B · Overlap syndrome · Peliosis hepatis · Portal hypertension · Portal hypertensive gastropathy · Portal vein thrombosis · Primary biliary cholangitis (PBC) · Primary sclerosing cholangitis (PSC) · Reye syndrome · Schistosomiasis · Sinusoidal obstruction syndrome (SOS) · Spontaneous bacterial peritonitis (SBP) · Steatohepatitis · Steatotic liver disease (SLD) · Thrombosis · Toxin · Type 2 diabetes · Vanishing bile duct syndrome · Variceal bleeding · Varices · Veno-occlusive disease · Vibrio vulnificus · Viral hepatitis · Withdrawal, alcohol · Yellow fever · Zieve syndrome

Symptom (29 terms)

Ascites · Asterixis · Biliary colic · Caput medusae · Coagulopathy · Edema · Frailty · Gynecomastia · Hematemesis · Hepatomegaly · Hepatosplenomegaly · Hyponatremia · Icterus · Jaundice · Jaundice, hemolytic (prehepatic) · Jaundice, hepatocellular · Jaundice, obstructive · Kayser-Fleischer rings · Melena · Neonatal jaundice · Pale stools · Pruritus · Sarcopenia · Spider angioma · Splenomegaly · Thrombocytopenia · Urine, dark · Xanthelasma · Xanthoma

Test (51 terms)

Albumin · Alkaline phosphatase (ALP) · Alpha-fetoprotein (AFP) · ALT (alanine aminotransferase) · Anti-mitochondrial antibody (AMA) · Antinuclear antibody (ANA) · Ascitic fluid analysis · AST (aspartate aminotransferase) · Bilirubin · Bilirubin, direct (conjugated) · Bilirubin, indirect (unconjugated) · Ceruloplasmin · Child-Pugh score · Elastography · Elevated liver enzymes · Ferritin · FIB-4 · FibroScan · Gamma-glutamyl transferase (GGT) · Genotype (hepatitis C) · HBV DNA · HCV RNA · Hepatic venous pressure gradient (HVPG) · Hepatitis B core antibody (anti-HBc) · Hepatitis B e

antigen (HBeAg) · Hepatitis B surface antibody (anti-HBs) · Hepatitis B surface antigen (HBsAg) · Indirect bilirubin · INR (international normalized ratio) · Liver enzymes · Liver function tests (LFTs) · Liver span · Liver stiffness measurement (LSM) · MELD score · Platelets · Prothrombin time (PT) · Reference range · Serology · Serum-ascites albumin gradient (SAAG) · Smooth muscle antibody (SMA) · Surveillance (HCC) · Sustained virologic response (SVR) · Total bilirubin · Transaminases · Transient elastography · Triglycerides · Tumor markers · Unconjugated bilirubin · Urobilinogen · Viral load · West Haven criteria

Imaging (15 terms)

Abdominal ultrasound · Angiography · Arterial phase · Cholangiogram · Computed tomography (CT) · Contrast (dye) · CT angiography · Doppler ultrasound · HIDA scan (hepatobiliary scintigraphy) · LI-RADS · Magnetic resonance cholangiopancreatography (MRCP) · Magnetic resonance imaging (MRI) · MRI-PDFF · Triple-phase CT · Ultrasound

Procedure (32 terms)

Ablation · Albumin infusion · Anastomosis · Bariatric surgery · Biopsy, liver · Cholecystectomy · Embolization · Endoscopy, upper (EGD) · ERCP (endoscopic retrograde cholangiopancreatography) · Hepatectomy · Jugular vein · Kasai procedure · Laparoscopy · Palliative care · Paracentesis · Percutaneous transhepatic cholangiography (PTC) · Phlebectomy · Pringle maneuver · Radioembolization (Y-90) · Radiofrequency ablation (RFA) · Resection, liver · Roux-en-Y hepaticojejunostomy · Sclerotherapy · Segmentectomy · Shunt · Sphincterotomy · Stent · TIPS (transjugular intrahepatic portosystemic shunt) · Transarterial chemoembolization (TACE) · Transjugular liver biopsy · Variceal banding · Yttrium-90 (Y-90)

Medicine (36 terms)

Acetaminophen · Anticoagulant · Antiviral therapy · Beta-blocker · Bile acid sequestrant · Carvedilol · Corticosteroids · Cyclosporine · Direct-acting antiviral (DAA) · Diuretic · Entecavir · FXR agonist · Immunosuppressants · Interferon · Lactulose · Loop diuretic · Methotrexate · Midodrine · Mycophenolate · N-acetylcysteine (NAC) · Nadolol · Nonselective beta-blocker (NSBB) · NSAIDs · Nucleos(t)ide analogs · Obeticholic acid · Octreotide · Propranolol · Resmetirom · Rifaximin · Spironolactone · Statins · Tacrolimus · Tenofovir · Terlipressin · Ursodiol (UDCA) · Vaccination (liver-related)

Nutrition (19 terms)

Binge drinking · Body mass index (BMI) · Coffee · Exercise (for liver health) · Mediterranean diet · Milk thistle · Nutrition support · Probiotics · Protein (dietary) · Sodium restriction · Standard drink · Turmeric (curcumin) · Ultra-processed foods · Vitamin A · Vitamin D · Vitamin E · Vitamin K · Weight loss (for fatty liver) · Zinc

Transplant (21 terms)

Bridge to transplant · Donation after circulatory death (DCD) · Donor, deceased · Donor, living · Exception points (MELD) · Extended-criteria donor liver · Graft · Hepatic artery thrombosis · Liver transplant · Living donor liver transplant (LDLT) · Normothermic machine perfusion · OPTN / UNOS · Organ procurement organization (OPO) · Orthotopic liver transplant · Rejection · Split liver transplant · Transplant center · Transplant evaluation · Transplant list (waiting list) · Waiting list · Warm ischemia

Genetic (16 terms)

Alagille syndrome · Alpha-1 antitrypsin deficiency · Caroli disease · Congenital hepatic fibrosis · Crigler-Najjar syndrome · Dubin-Johnson syndrome · Gilbert syndrome · Glycogen storage disease · Hemochromatosis · Polycystic liver disease · Porphyria · Progressive familial intrahepatic cholestasis (PFIC) · Rotor syndrome · Tyrosinemia · UGT1A1 · Wilson disease

Pathology (11 terms)

Bridging fibrosis · Collagen · Fibrosis · Fibrosis stage · Granuloma · Hepatic steatosis · Histology · Mallory-Denk bodies · Necrosis · Nodule (liver) · Steatosis

People (2 terms)

Hepatologist · Support group

Resources for learning more

Organization	What it offers	Website*
American Liver Foundation	Liver disease education and support	liverfoundation.org
NIDDK, National Institutes of Health	Plain-language liver disease information	niddk.nih.gov
American Association for the Study of Liver Diseases (AASLD)	Clinical guidance and patient resources	aasld.org
Hepatitis B Foundation	Hepatitis B education and support	hepb.org
CDC Viral Hepatitis	Testing, vaccines, and information	cdc.gov/hepatitis
MedlinePlus	Health topics and medical words explained	medlineplus.gov
OPTN and Transplant Living	Transplant waiting list and patient information	optn.transplant.hrsa.gov ; transplantliving.org

*Confirm websites before relying on them. TLHF also offers companion guides on liver anatomy, liver protection, and alcohol and the liver.

From TLHF

Words can be frightening, but understanding them gives you power. Ask your care team to explain any term, as often as you need. **Health. Awareness. Hope.**

Notes