

the liver

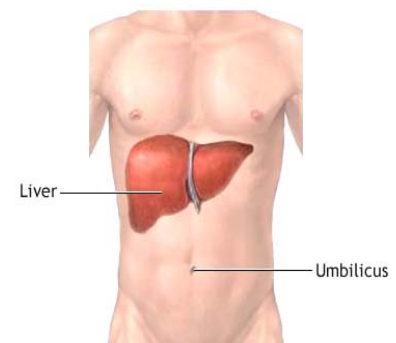
The **Liver** is an organ that plays a major role in metabolism and has a number of functions in the body including drug detoxification, glycogen storage, and plasma protein synthesis. It also produces bile, which is important for digestion. The adult human liver normally weighs between 1.3 - 3.0 kilograms, and is a soft, pinkish-brown "boomerang shaped" organ. It is the second largest organ (the largest organ being the skin) and the largest gland within the human body. The liver lies on the right of the stomach and makes a kind of bed for the gallbladder (which stores bile).

The liver is among the few internal human organs capable of natural regeneration of lost tissue; as little as 25% of remaining liver can regenerate into a whole liver again. The liver produces and excretes bile required for food digestion.

Some of the bile drains directly into the duodenum, and some is stored in the gallbladder.

The liver performs several roles in carbohydrate metabolism including *Gluconeogenesis* (the formation of glucose from certain amino acids, lactate or glycerol) and the breakdown of insulin and other hormones. The liver also performs several roles in lipid metabolism including:

- *Cholesterol synthesis*
- The production of triglycerides (fats)



What is fatty liver?

Fatty liver is the collection of excessive amounts of fat in liver cells. Fatty liver, or steatosis, can be a temporary or long term condition which is not harmful itself, but can indicate there is some other type of problem. It is a condition that is reversible once the cause of the problem is diagnosed and corrected.

Possible explanations of fatty liver include the transfer of fat from other parts of the body or an increase in the extraction of fat presented to the liver from the intestine. Other explanations are that the liver reduces the rate it breaks down and removes fat. Eating fatty foods does not by itself produce a fatty liver.

Alcohol, obesity, starvation, diabetes mellitus, corticosteroids, poisons (carbon tetrachloride and yellow phosphorus), Cushing's syndrome, and hyperlipidemia are some causes of fatty liver.

Symptoms can be varied for those who suffer fatty liver. For some there are no symptoms at all, for others symptoms can include, pain under the ribcage on the right side of the body, swelling of the abdomen, jaundice and fever.

Treatment for fatty liver can depend upon the cause for the sufferer. In fatty liver caused by alcoholism, the treatment is to give up drinking alcohol and to eat a healthy, well balanced diet. Vitamin and mineral supplements along with following a well balanced diet may be useful.

References: <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Liver> <http://www.healthatoz.com>
<http://www.healthscout.com/ency/1/578/main.html>