



National Liver Awareness Month

The liver is the second largest organ. It is incredibly hard working, performing hundreds of critical functions that keep your body healthy.

The liver processes what you eat and drink into energy and nutrients your body uses. It also filters out the harmful substances from your blood. The liver can repair itself and create new healthy liver tissue.

Millions of Americans have liver disease and don't even know it. In fact, liver disease is one of the top ten causes of death in the U.S. One out of every 10 Americans is affected by liver disease. Some liver diseases can be prevented. There are more than 100 liver diseases. The most common are hepatitis A, hepatitis B, hepatitis C, fatty liver disease, NASH (Nonalcoholic Steatohepatitis), and alcohol-related liver disease.

Ways You Can Take Care of Your Liver

Health Lifestyle

Eating a healthy diet and exercising regularly help the liver to work well. Eating an unhealthy diet can lead to liver disease. For example, a person who eats a lot of fatty foods is at higher risk of being overweight and having non-alcoholic fatty liver disease.

A healthy diet includes:

- Eat foods from all the food groups: grains, protein, dairy, fruits, vegetables, and fats
- Eat foods that have a lot of fiber such as fresh fruits and vegetables, whole grain breads, rice and cereals

For people who have liver disease, eating a healthy diet makes it easier for the liver to do its jobs and can help repair some liver damage. An unhealthy diet can make the liver work very hard and can cause more damage to it. It is important for people with liver disease to maintain a healthy weight by eating a balanced diet with foods from all food groups. Also,

- Do not eat uncooked shellfish such as oysters and clams
- Limit eating foods that have a lot of sugar or salt
- Limit eating fatty foods

Limit the Amount of Alcohol You Drink

Alcohol can damage or destroy liver cells. Liver damage can lead to the buildup of fat in your liver (fatty liver), inflammation or swelling of your liver (alcoholic hepatitis), and/or scarring of your liver (cirrhosis). For people with liver disease, even a small amount of alcohol can make the disease worse. Talk to your doctor about what amount of alcohol is right for you.

Manage Your Medications

Every medicine, vitamin, supplement that you take passes through the liver, including all the medicines you take:

- Over-the-counter medicines
- Prescription medicines
- Vitamins
- Dietary supplements
- Alternative medicines

Your liver is responsible for processing all of these substances. It is important to understand exactly how you should be taking your medications in order to avoid putting undue stress on your liver.

- Learn about medicines and how they can affect the liver
- Follow dosing instructions
- Talk to a doctor or pharmacist often about the medicines you are taking

Avoid Breathing in or Touching Toxins

Toxins can injure liver cells.

- Limit direct contact with toxins from cleaning and aerosol products, insecticides, chemicals, and additives in cigarettes
- Do not smoke

By: American Liver Foundation
www.liverfoundation.org

Recipe of the Month

Stuffed Eggplant Serves 2

Ingredients:

- 1 medium eggplant
- 1 cup of water
- 1 tbsp. olive oil
- 6oz. boneless, skinless chicken breast, cut into strips
- ¼ cup chopped onion
- ¼ cup chopped red & green bell peppers
- 1 cup canned unsalted tomatoes, drained except for ¼ cup liquid
- ¼ cup chopped celery
- ½ cup sliced fresh mushrooms
- 1 cup whole-wheat bread crumbs
- Freshly ground black pepper to taste

Directions:

Preheat oven to 350 F. Lightly coat baking dish with cooking spray. Trim the ends off eggplant and cut in half lengthwise. Using a spoon, scoop out pulp, leaving a shell 1/4 inch thick. Place shells in baking dish and add water to bottom of dish. Chop eggplant pulp into cubes. Set aside. In a large, nonstick frying pan, heat olive oil over medium-high heat. Add chicken strips and sauté until chicken is lightly browned and no longer pink. Add diced eggplant, onion, peppers, tomatoes and reserved tomato juice, celery, and mushrooms to chicken. Reduce heat and simmer until vegetables are tender, about 10 minutes. Stir in the bread crumbs and black pepper. Scoop half the mixture into each eggplant shell. Cover with aluminum foil and bake until eggplant is softened and the stuffing is warmed through, about 15 minutes. Transfer eggplant to warmed individual plates and serve immediately.

Nutritional Information:

Calories 346, Total Fat 10g, Cholesterol 49mg, Total Carbs 37g, Protein 27g

