

Healthy Liver, Healthy Life

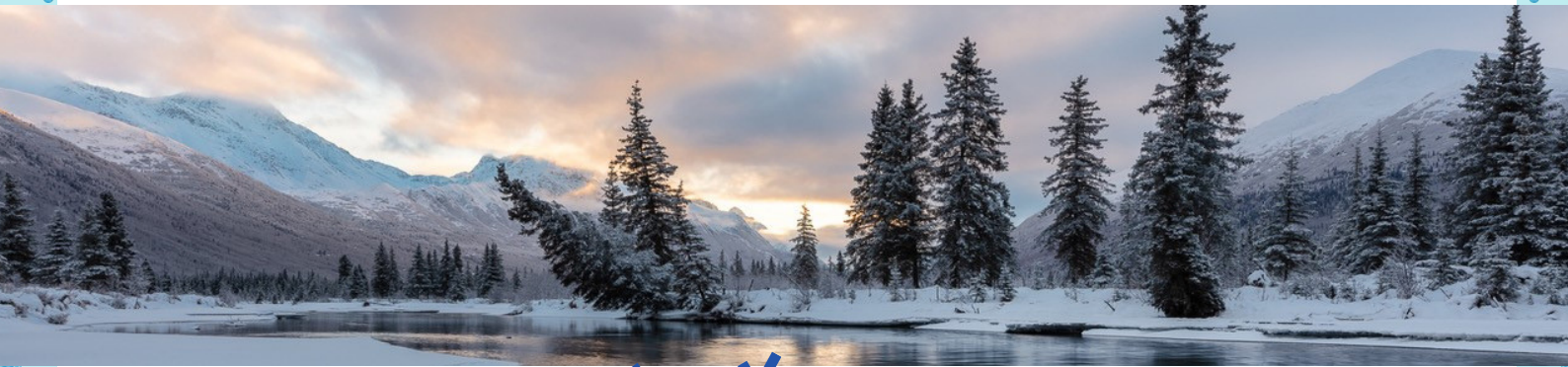
Liver Disease & Hepatitis Program

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Winter Newsletter 2018-2019



Fatty Liver Disease

It's that time of year! The season of food temptation. It starts with pumpkin spice lattes, Thanksgiving dinner, peppermint Mochas, Christmas cookies, hot chocolate, and continues with Valentine's chocolates! During this time of spending much of our days inside, it's easy to put on that "hibernation weight", eating more and sleeping more. Not only are you adding excess fat around your belly, you are adding fat to your liver, too. This happens as the extra calories we eat get stored in the liver as fat.

Too much stored fat in the liver (steatosis) leads to fatty liver disease. It puts you at higher risk for heart disease, heart attacks and stroke. Sometimes this extra fat inflames the liver, which can lead to severe scarring (cirrhosis) and can lead to liver failure and liver cancer.

We have included a recipe and some tips to improve liver health and help you get the most out of time with your loved ones.



Healthy Liver Tips

(from our liver clinic staff)

- Include a healthy goal in your New Years' Resolutions. Physical health, mental health, and spiritual health are all important to remember this time of year.
- Take time to appreciate good food and good conversation by avoiding distractions while eating (silence your phones, turn off the TV)
- Plan a family walk (or ski or skate) after a meal
- Measure out snack servings so you don't over do it
- Find savory recipes to try (like our Caribou Soup)
- Remember that a healthy liver lets you enjoy a healthy life!

Cirrhosis

Cirrhosis occurs when scar tissue replaces healthy liver tissue. The number of working liver cells is decreased and so the liver doesn't function very well. This can happen after there has been repeated inflammation (swelling and irritation) to the liver over a long period of time.

If you have advanced fibrosis or cirrhosis, be sure to:

Get a liver ultrasound and an AFP (alpha feto-protein) blood test done every 6 months

These tests can help to find liver cancer early when it is still treatable!

Drinking 2 to 3 cups of coffee a day helps to improve your liver health!!

If you do not have **health insurance**, be sure to apply for the tribally sponsored insurance (TSHIP) and/or for Medicaid. Call 907-729-2935 for more information.

This could help you pay for travel to get labs and ultrasound to monitor for liver cancer.

Hep B and C Reminders

If you have or ever had a chronic liver disease, such as Hep B or C, drinking any amount of alcohol can cause cirrhosis of the liver to develop quickly. Limit your alcohol intake.

Hepatitis B

Remember to get your blood drawn every 6 months and get ultrasound every 6 months if:

- You are a man over age 40
- Woman over 50
- AFP > 10
- You have a family member with liver cancer

Hepatitis C

Remember to get your blood drawn every 6 months.

You will need an ultrasound every 6 months if:

- You have advanced liver disease (bridging fibrosis or cirrhosis)
- AFP > 10

To schedule an ultrasound:

- In Anchorage, call the Liver Clinic at 729-1560 or your Family Medicine Provider
- Outside of Anchorage, it is important to go to your regional hub for ultrasound. Talk to your health aide about this.



Hepatitis A and B are preventable by vaccine. Everyone should be vaccinated!

Healthy Liver Recipe

Caribou Stew

Serving size: 2 cups

Calories per serving: 513

Ingredients:

*1 pound caribou meat
3 medium potatoes
1 onion (chopped)
1 package mixed vegetables
1 can of tomatoes
1 tablespoon beef soup seasoning base
1/2 teaspoon Tabasco pepper sauce
3 tablespoons Spike seasoning*

Instructions:

Cut the caribou meat into bite size pieces. Can use ribs, backbones, or any pieces of meat with bones. Boil caribou for 30 minutes. Add potatoes, onion, vegetables, and tomatoes. Add beef soup seasoning base, Tabasco, and Spike to taste. Let simmer for 1 hour.

-From Jeannette M. Smith, Wasilla (originally from Hooper Bay) in Traditional Food Guide for the Alaska Native People

Now Available! Harm Reduction Kits!

These new kits help promote safer injection and sex practices that can reduce the spread of HIV, hepatitis C, other bloodborne infections as well as sexually transmitted infections (STIs). To receive a kit and for more information, contact the Liver Clinic.



Hep C & Organ Donation

If you have hepatitis C, be aware that YOU CAN BE an organ donor. Transplant centers accept organs from people with hepatitis C. This helps reduce transplant wait list times. Recipients are told that the organ is from a person who had hepatitis C, and they can choose whether or not to accept the organ. Treatment is then provided to the recipient to prevent and/or cure hepatitis C.

Research Corner

U.S. data shows that only half of people with hepatitis C know they are infected. If you or someone you care about was born between 1945-1965 or has risk factors for hepatitis C such as injection drug use, even just one time, get tested for hepatitis C virus.

AIH Medication Highlight

If you take **prednisone** or **methylprednisolone**, here are some things you can do to reduce side effects:

- Take the entire dose *early* in the day with food in order to avoid sleep problems and night sweats
- *Reduce* salt intake to avoid swelling
- Eat *healthy* snacks such as raw vegetables, fruit, and fiber-rich crackers to satisfy increased appetite and *avoid weight gain*
- Eat calcium-rich foods, like salmon, to *prevent bone loss*