



Facts at a Glance

The Liver and Liver Disease

- § The liver is one of the body's largest organs, performing hundreds of functions every day. It removes harmful substances from the blood, makes bile to help digest fat, and stores energy.
- § 30 million Americans - one in every 10 - are or have been affected by a liver, biliary, or gallbladder disease.
- § Liver disease and cirrhosis are the 7th leading cause of death among adults between the ages of 25 and 64 in the U.S.
- § Many forms of liver disease are preventable, and many more, if detected early, can be treated effectively.
- § About 15,000 children are hospitalized every year with pediatric liver diseases or disorders.
- § There are more than 100 types of liver disease, but hepatitis A, B, and C are the most common.
- § There are vaccines that can protect you against hepatitis A and B, but not hepatitis C.
- § Chronic hepatitis C and alcoholic liver disease are the leading causes of cirrhosis in the U.S.
- § About one-third of the U.S. population becomes infected with hepatitis A during their lifetime, though most recover in a few weeks.
- § More than four million Americans have been infected with hepatitis C; it is responsible for 8,000-10,000 deaths annually.
- § 1.4 million Americans are chronically infected with hepatitis B; it is responsible for 5,000 deaths annually.
- § Hepatitis B and C significantly increase the risk of liver cancer, one of the only cancers currently on the rise in the U.S.
- § In 2004, there were nearly 18,000 individuals on the waiting list for a liver transplant. That year, about 1,300 people died while waiting for a suitable donor.
- § Hepatitis C is the number one reason for liver transplantation in this country.
- § Nonalcoholic fatty liver disease (NASH), an obesity-related chronic liver disease, may affect as many as one in every four adults over the age of 18.