

Avondale Medical Practice

Dr Craig J Smith
MBChB, MRCP

Dr Laura Coventry
MBChB, MRCP, DipGer

Dr Shona MacAlpine
MBChB, MCGRP, BSC, DipDerm

Dr Judith Antoniou
MBChB, MRCP

Dr Ruth Turner
MBChB, MRCP

Mrs Yvonne Gilmour
Practice Manager



Strathaven Health Centre
The Ward
Strathaven
ML10 6AS

Tel: (01357) 529595

Date as Postmark

Dear

Patient ID

Why am I receiving this letter?

You recently had an abdominal ultrasound performed, which you may or may not have been informed showed evidence of a build-up of fat in your liver. This condition is known as **non-alcoholic fatty liver disease**, or **NAFLD** for short, and this diagnosis is often made incidentally on ultrasound as in your case. **It is very unlikely to be causing you any symptoms.**

NAFLD is a very common problem in the UK, with around 1 in 3 people affected. However, a healthy liver should contain little or no fat at all, and it is important for you to be aware of this finding as having an excess build-up of fat in your liver is associated with an increased risk of other serious health problems including type 2 diabetes, high blood pressure and kidney disease. If you already have diabetes, fatty liver is associated with an increased risk of heart problems including angina and heart attacks.

Because of the increased risk of these conditions, you will be invited to the practice for an annual review. If you already have an annual review because of another condition such as high blood pressure, you won't need to make an additional appointment.

By making some changes to what you eat and increasing the amount of exercise you do, it's possible to **stop NAFLD from progressing any further** and therefore to reduce the risk of the more serious health problems associated with it.

Changes you can make to manage NAFLD

- **Weight loss**

If you are overweight (i.e. a BMI of over 25), losing just 10% of your weight will remove fat from the liver. The NHS has developed a weight loss plan which can help you to lose weight safely and keep it off. You can access it here: <https://www.nhs.uk/live-well/healthy-weight/start-the-nhs-weight-loss-plan/>

- **Healthy diet**

Try to avoid or significantly cut down foods that are high in fat, sugar and salt. The British Heart Foundation website has lots of resources about ways in which you can make healthier food choices: <https://www.bhf.org.uk/informationsupport/risk-factors>

- **Exercise**

Regular exercise will reduce fatty build-up in the liver, as well as enormously benefiting your general wellbeing. Try to aim for around 150 minutes per week of moderate intensity exercise, such as walking or cycling; this is equivalent to a brisk 30 minute walk 5 days a week.

- **Stopping smoking**

If you smoke, your risk of high blood pressure, stroke and heart problems is significantly higher. 'Quit Your Way' is a free NHS Lanarkshire smoking cessation service that offers one-to-one support- make an appointment today by calling 01698 206 376.

- **Cutting down on alcohol**

NAFLD is not caused by alcohol, but drinking may make it worse. It's therefore advisable to reduce the amount of alcohol you drink. You should aim to be drinking no more than 14 units of alcohol per week, regardless of whether you are male or female.

If you are unsure if you drink too much alcohol, you can calculate the number of units you drink here:

<https://alcoholchange.org.uk/alcohol-facts/interactive-tools/unit-calculator>

If you would like to discuss this further with a GP, please do not hesitate to contact the practice for a telephone appointment.

Kind regards,

Avondale Medical Practice