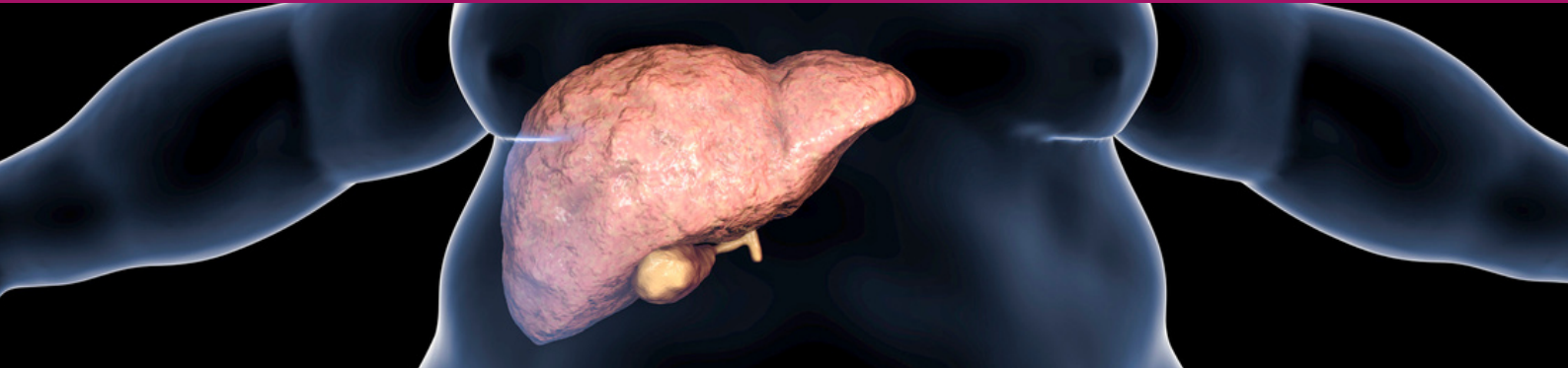


What is Non-alcoholic fatty liver disease (NAFLD)

A condition in which fat accumulates in the liver in people who drink little or no alcohol



Non-alcoholic fatty liver disease (NAFLD) refers to a spectrum of liver damage where fat builds up in the liver, and is typically accompanied by insulin resistance. Lipid accumulation in the liver results from the imbalance between the delivery of lipids and their hepatic uptake, synthesis, oxidation, and secretion, and mitochondrial dysfunction may also play a key role in the development of advanced NAFLD. Insulin resistance in NAFLD is characterized by reduced whole-body, hepatic, and adipose tissue insulin sensitivity (1).

There are four stages of NAFLD: 1. Steatosis, where fat starts to accumulate in liver cells, 2. Non-alcoholic steatohepatitis (NASH), where the liver becomes inflamed, 3. Fibrosis, where the persistent inflammation causes scar tissues, and 4. Cirrhosis, where damage is irreversible and can lead to more serious disease.

UK Statistics

It is estimated that a third of the UK population has NAFLD, mostly in the early stage and that approximately 70%–80% of obese and diabetic patients have non-alcoholic fatty liver disease (NAFLD). It is usually diagnosed through abnormal liver function tests and/or ultrasound scans, sometimes biopsies are performed. Risk factors for NAFLD include being overweight and obese, metabolic syndrome and Type 2 Diabetes, making it part of the cardiometabolic dysregulation cluster (2)

Diet & Nutrition

At present there are no drugs available to treat NAFLD. Diet therefore plays an important role in preventing and managing the risk factors that lead to NAFLD.

BANT nutrition practitioners assess and identify potential nutritional imbalances to understand how these may contribute to an individual's symptoms and health concerns.

Practitioners consider each individual to be unique and recommend personalised nutrition and lifestyle programmes rather than a 'one size fits all' approach.

1. Bugianesi E, Moscatiello S, Ciaravella MF, Marchesini G. Insulin resistance in nonalcoholic fatty liver disease. *Curr Pharm Des.* 2010 Jun;16(17):1941-51. doi: 10.2174/138161210791208875. PMID: 20370677.
2. NHS <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/non-alcoholic-fatty-liver-disease/> (2018).

