

Managing Metabolic Associated Fatty Liver Disease (MAFLD)

This resource is for people with Metabolic Associated Fatty Liver disease (MAFLD). It provides nutrition and lifestyle information to help you manage your condition.

What is MAFLD?

MAFLD, previously known as non-alcoholic fatty liver disease, is a condition where excess fat builds up in the liver.

Risk factors include:

- Being obese or overweight.
- Having diabetes.
- Having high blood cholesterol and triglyceride (a type of blood fat) levels.

What are the effects of MAFLD?

MAFLD does not always cause harm to the liver, but it can:

- Increase your risk of diabetes, heart attack and stroke.
- Cause inflammation of the liver, which can lead to **cirrhosis** (irreversible scarring on the liver), and liver failure.

What should you do if you have MAFLD?

- Eat a healthy balanced diet.
- Achieve or maintain a healthy weight.
- Exercise regularly.
- Avoid smoking and alcohol.
- Manage your blood sugar levels (if you have diabetes).
- Manage high blood pressure and high cholesterol.

1. Eat a healthy diet

Make changes step by step so you can continue them long-term. This will help maintain weight loss and keep your liver healthy.

Plan your meals

Planning meals helps you avoid making impulse food decisions and reduce the temptation to grab takeaway.

Base your meals on whole foods from the Mediterranean Diet

- Add as many vegetables as you can to your meals and snacks.
- Eat at least two pieces of fruit a day.
- Add olive oil to your food (up to 3 tablespoons per day).
- Include fish at least two times a week.
- Choose low fat meat or meat alternatives like chicken, eggs, and legumes (e.g., chickpeas, kidney beans, and nuts).
- Reduce red meat to once a week or on special occasions.
- Choose grainy breads & cereals, rice and pasta.
- Choose low fat dairy (e.g., milk, yoghurt, cheese).

Eating foods from the main food groups will help keep you full and reduce the desire for high fat or sugar foods.

See the NEMO Mediterranean diet sheet for more information

(www.health.qld.gov.au/nutrition/patients).

Mediterranean Diet Pyramid

A contemporary approach to delicious, healthy eating

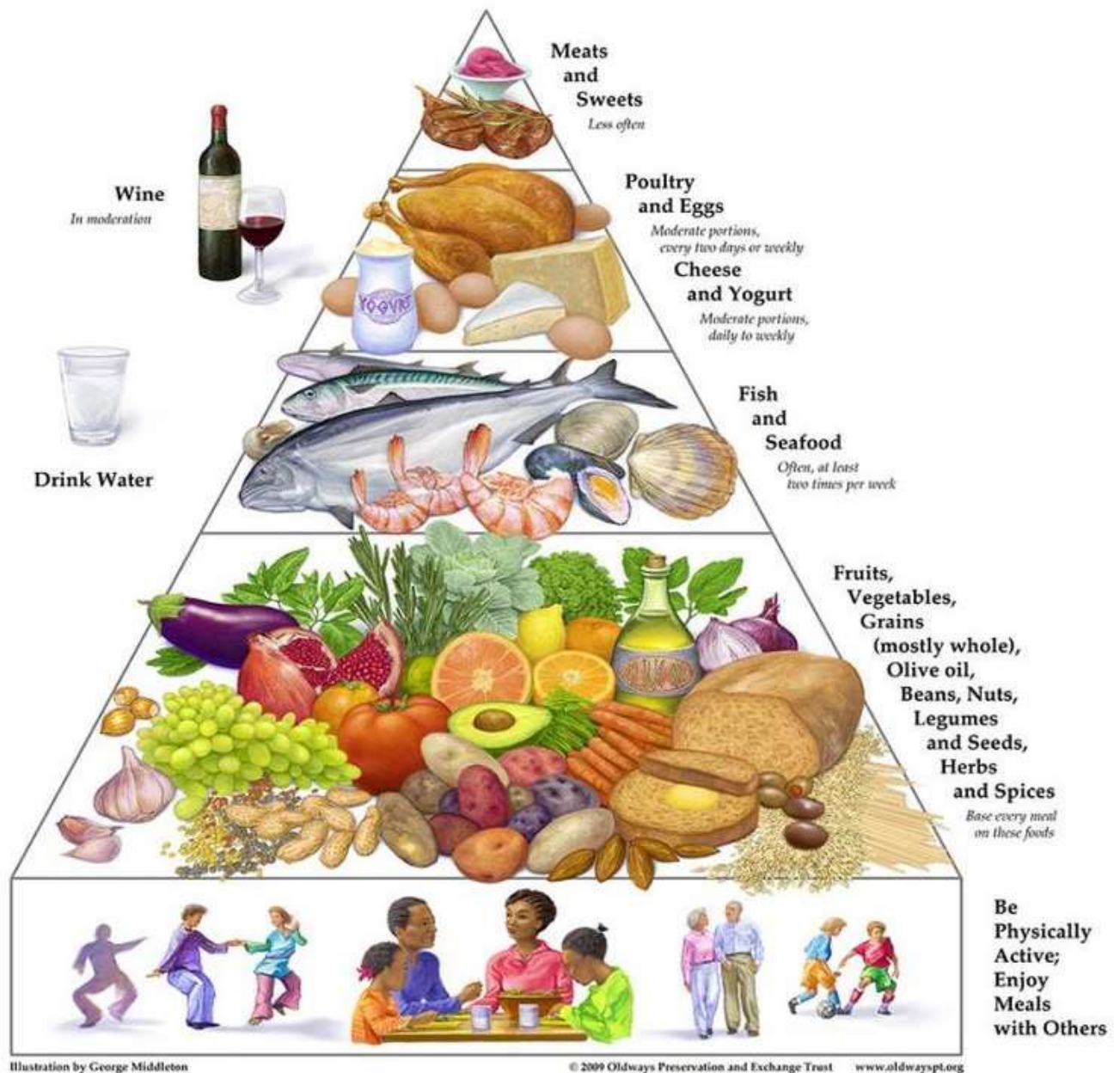


Image reproduced with permission from Oldways - oldwayspt.org

NOTE: When you have liver disease, it is best to limit or avoid alcohol.

Build a balanced plate

Include a large serve of vegetables (1/2 of the plate), a palm sized protein serve (1/4 of the plate), and a small serve of carbohydrate (1/4 of the plate).

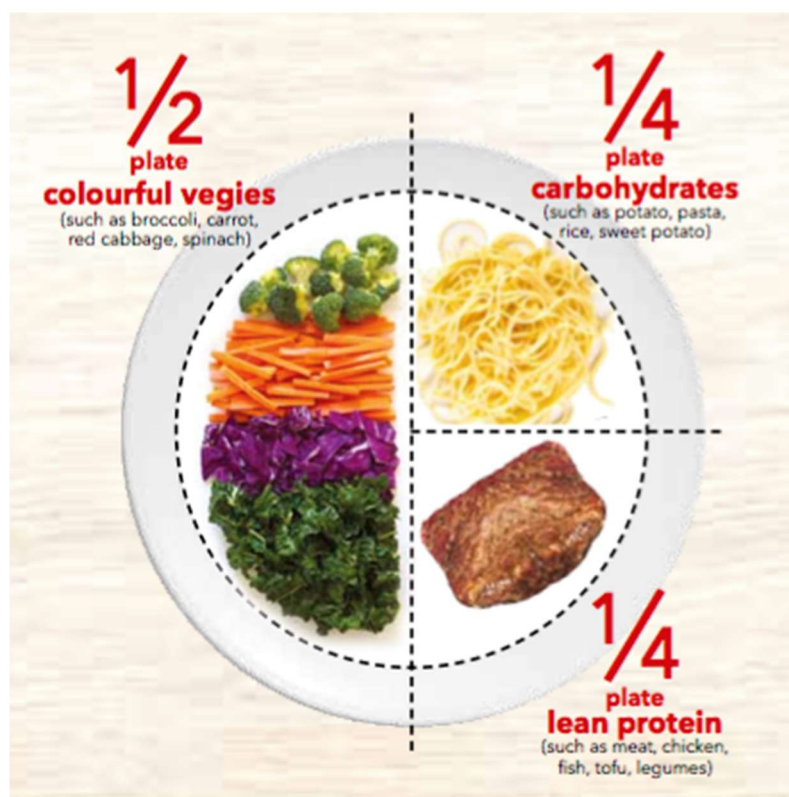


Image reproduced with permission from Healthy Food Guide Magazine www.healthyfoodguide.com.au.

Reduce your portion sizes

Use smaller plates and bowls to reduce the amount you eat, to help with weight loss.

Fill up on high fibre foods

Eat high fibre foods such as grainy breads and cereals, vegetables, legumes and fruit. By choosing these foods, you may find you can eat more food but with less energy.

Examples of higher fibre choices with more food and less energy include:

- 2 pieces of **fruit** instead of 1 glass of fruit drink
- 1 medium **jacket potato** instead of 1/2 bucket of hot chips
- 2 cups **air-popped popcorn** instead of 1/2 small packet of chips

Not all fats are equal

All fats are high in energy, although there are several different types of fat.

Unsaturated fats are a healthy type of fat. **Include** these fats in your diet to reduce your risk of heart disease. They include:

- ✓ Monounsaturated fats – found in extra virgin olive oil, avocados, olives, almonds and cashews.
- ✓ Polyunsaturated fats – found in sunflower seeds and oil, canola oil, soybeans and soymilk. Also found in nuts (walnuts, hazel and Brazil), seeds (chia, flaxseed and sunflower), oily fish and seafood (salmon, sardines, tuna and mussels).

Saturated fats are not so good for our health. **Limit** these fats in your diet.

- ✗ Saturated fats – found in animal fats, including butter, lard, ghee, as well as the fat on meat and deli meats. Also found in coconut oil, full fat dairy, fried foods, pastries, and cream.

Limit added sugars

Added sugars can increase the calories in your diet and are low in nutrients. Ideas to reduce added sugar include:

- Use less/no sugar in your tea/coffee.
- Try fruit instead of sugar on cereal.
- Use sugar free spreads instead of jam and honey, such as vegemite or peanut butter (no added sugar). Or choose spreads sweetened with artificial sweeteners or stevia.
- Replace fruit juice with fresh fruit.
- Eat tinned fruit in water/natural juice instead of syrup.
- Use unsweetened yoghurt (natural/Greek) instead of sweetened yoghurt.
- Eat less biscuits and cakes.

Switch to healthier drinks

Choose water as your main drink. Replace sugary drinks like soft drinks, cordials, sports drinks and juices with 'no added sugar' or 'diet' alternatives. Talk to your Doctor to check if you should avoid alcohol.

2. Achieve and maintain a healthy weight. Reduce your weight if you are overweight or obese.

If you are overweight, losing 7-10% of your body weight can:

- Decrease fat in the liver.
- Improve blood sugar control.
- Improve blood pressure.

Aim for a loss of 0.5-1kg a week.

Your current weight: _____

Your goal weight: _____

Your waist circumference: _____

Goal waist circumferences:

Females: Initially: less than 88cm

Long term: less than 80cm

Males: Initially: less than 102cm

Long term: less than 94cm

Weight loss may not be realistic for everyone. Making changes to your diet and lifestyle can improve your health even if your weight remains the same.

3. Increase exercise

- Increasing activity can help you reach a healthy weight. It can also decrease your risk of developing diabetes and help control your blood sugar.
- Try to do at least 30 minutes of exercise 5 times a week, increasing to 30 to 45 minutes a day. Examples of moderate intensity exercise include brisk walking, dancing, and gardening.
- Talk to your Doctor before starting exercise if you have existing medical conditions. Your Doctor may send you to an Exercise Physiologist to help you. If you have diabetes, talk to your Diabetes Educator, and manage your blood sugar well.



Ideas to increase activity

- Aim to be active every day in as many ways as you can (e.g., join a dance class or walking group).
- Think of movement as an opportunity, not an inconvenience (e.g., go for a bike ride or play tennis with friends).
- Increase your incidental exercise (e.g., walk briskly, clean the house, sit less).
- Choose activities that you can do often and find easy and enjoyable, such as walking.
- Find an activity that best matches your current level of fitness (e.g., break exercise up into 2-3 x 15 min blocks).
- Consider including resistance (strength) training to maintain muscle strength.

Suggested meal plan

BREAKFAST

1 cup cooked oats (1/2 cup raw oats) or ½ - 1 cup high fibre cereal with low fat milk

OR

2 slices of multigrain bread with baked beans / tomato / mushrooms / peanut butter (no added sugar) / cottage cheese

AND

1 piece of fruit

Water to drink

MORNING TEA

See snack ideas

LUNCH

2 slices multigrain bread OR 1 bread roll / wrap

AND

Salad with tuna / salmon / chicken / low fat cheese

Water to drink

AFTERNOON TEA

See snack ideas

DINNER

100 – 120g lean chicken (no skin) / fish / eggs / legumes

AND

Large serve of vegetables (e.g., beans, broccoli, cabbage, carrots, cauliflower, peas, spinach, zucchini)

AND

1 cup pasta / 2/3 cup rice / 1/2 cup sweet potato / 1 medium potato

Water to drink

SNACK IDEAS:

Fruit

Low fat natural / Greek / diet yoghurt (100-200g)

2 oatmeal biscuits

2-3 grainy crackers with cottage cheese and tomato

1 thin slice of fruit bread

Raw, unsalted nuts (5-6)

For further information, contact your Dietitian or Nutritionist _____