

## Liver Failure

**Overview** The liver is the second largest organ in the body and has several crucial functions:

1. Processing and digesting food
2. Storing vitamins, minerals, and important chemicals
3. Combating infections
4. Manufacturing proteins and enzymes essential for body functions
5. Clearing harmful toxins from the body

Liver failure occurs when the liver is damaged beyond repair and can no longer function.

**Causes** Liver failure can develop rapidly (acute) or over a long period (chronic).

### Acute (Rapid Damage)

- Medication overdose
- Viral infections (hepatitis A, B, and C)
- Ingestion of poisonous substances

### Chronic (Months to Years)

- Infections (hepatitis B and C)
- Alcohol abuse
- Cirrhosis
- Hemochromatosis (iron overload)
- Malnutrition



Image via [www.wikipedia.org](http://www.wikipedia.org)

## Symptoms

- Bleeding
- Confusion
- Coma
- Fluid buildup in the body
- Hand tremors
- Increased susceptibility to infections
- Jaundice (yellowing of the skin and eyes)
- Loss of appetite
- Malnutrition
- Nausea and vomiting
- Swollen abdomen (Ascites)

## Investigations

- **Blood tests:** To assess liver function and identify underlying causes.
- **Ultrasound of the abdomen (USS):** Imaging to detect liver abnormalities.
- **Liver biopsy:** Occasionally required for further diagnosis.

## Treatment

- Treat the underlying cause
- Liver transplant in severe cases

For more detailed information and personalized advice, consult your healthcare provider.