

WHFoods: What foods can improve liver health?

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Your liver is the organ responsible for an enormous number of metabolic activities, and you'll need a plentiful supply of virtually all nutrients for your liver to be optimally healthy. In general, fruits and vegetables would be at the top of our list in the support category, since they contain such a wide range of nutrients that participate in liver function. Additionally, if you are focused on liver health, it is important to consume foods that are organically grown; the liver is an organ that detoxifies chemicals and therefore with organically grown foods you'll reduce your exposure to agricultural chemicals. In this same toxic exposure category, moderate consumption of alcohol (or less) would also be important to the health of your liver, since this organ postpones other important functions when it is trying to metabolize excess alcohol.

Fried foods and other high-fat foods (like processed foods containing hydrogenated oils) would also be particularly hard on your liver. Just as with alcohol, there is a limit to the total amount of fat than your liver can process while maintaining all of its other metabolic activities.

There are a couple of food groups that would also be especially helpful in supporting your liver's ability to detoxify chemicals. First are foods rich in sulfur. Sulfur-containing compounds are one of the primary types of molecules used to help the liver detoxify a wide range of prescription medications, pesticides, and other types of environmental toxins. Foods in this category would include onions, garlic, and egg yolks. (We'd caution against overconsumption of egg yolks, however, due to their higher concentration of cholesterol and saturated fat. Two-to-four eggs per week would be a very reasonable amount for most persons). Some additional sulfur-containing foods are worth mentioning as a category of their own - namely, the cruciferous vegetables. There are some unique sulfur compounds in these foods that may be especially beneficial in liver detoxification processes. Foods in this group include broccoli, cabbage, cauliflower, collard greens, kale, and Brussels sprouts.

To support your liver's immune function, we also feel obligated to mention some culinary spices that have extensive research with respect to their role in liver support. Those spices include turmeric, cinnamon, and licorice.

According to the American Liver Foundation here are some additional ways to keep your liver healthy:

Eat a well balanced, nutritionally adequate diet. If you enjoy foods from each of the four food groups, you will probably obtain the nutrients you need.

Cut down on the amount of deep-fried and fatty foods you and your family consume. Doctors believe that the risk of gallbladder disorders (including gallstones, a liver-related disease) can be reduced by avoiding high-fat and cholesterol foods.

Minimize your consumption of smoked, cured and salted foods. Taste your food before adding salt! Or try alternative seasonings in your cooking such as lemon juice, onion, vinegar, garlic, pepper, mustard, cloves, sage or thyme.

Increase your intake of high-fiber foods such as fresh fruits and vegetables, whole grain breads, rice and cereals. A high-fiber diet is especially helpful in keeping the liver healthy.

Rich desserts, snacks and drinks are high in calories because of the amount of sweetening (and often fat) they contain. Why not munch on some fruit instead?

Keep your weight close to ideal. Medical researchers have established a direct correlation between obesity and the development of gallbladder disorders.

For more information on this topic, see:

- [Broccoli](#)
- [\[Brussels sprouts](#)
- [\[Cabbage](#)
- [\[Cauliflower](#)
- [\[Cinnamon](#)
- [\[Collard greens](#)
- [\[Eggs, hen](#)
- [\[Garlic](#)
- [\[Kale](#)
- [\[Onions](#)
- [\[Turmeric, ground](#)

References:

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