Liver Disease Diet

The liver disease diet offers guidelines regarding what foods to eat while affected by a liver disease. The liver is the largest organ in the body and is involved in many important bodily functions. Some of the liver's functions are to remove harmful substances from the bloodstream and makes sure they can exit the body. The liver also produces fluids used by the body, and helps use and store energy from food. Liver disease affects the functioning of the liver and the way your body uses energy from foods. An important part of the liver disease diet is to get the right amount of calories from a variety of foods.

GUIDELINES:

Avoid or limit sodium in your diet.

- Sodium is a mineral and helps the body change the amount of water and fluids it holds. Too much sodium can cause the body to hold on to too much fluid. You may need to decrease the amount of sodium in your diet if your body is collecting fluid in your stomach or legs.
- To decrease the amount of sodium in your diet, do not add extra salt to foods. Also, limit or avoid foods that contain lots of sodium, such as:
  - Salted snacks (pretzels, potato chips, and crackers).
  - Canned foods (vegetables, soups, juice).
  - Salted and cured meats, and deli meats.
  - Condiments (such as ketchup, mustard, soy sauce, barbecue sauce).
  - Sauerkraut and pickles.
  - Frozen dinners, processed or preserved foods.

Avoid or limit alcohol in your diet.

Drinking alcohol may harm your liver. Avoid or limit drinks containing alcohol such as beer, wine, and hard liquor.

Calories

It is important to make sure that you are getting enough calories in your diet so that you get your body enough energy and stay at a healthy weight. Include a variety of foods in your diet.

Carbohydrates

- Carbohydrates are found in foods such as breads and starches, grains (oats, flour), cereals, and some vegetables (corn, peas). Carbohydrates change the level of sugar in the blood.
- Advanced liver disease can affect how much sugar is in the blood and make it too high or too low. Eating carbohydrates in the right amount will help control your blood sugar. A registered dietician can help you determine how much carbohydrate you need each day.

Protein

- Eating the right amount of protein every day is also important for liver disease.
- Protein is found in foods such as meat, poultry (chicken, turkey), fish, milk, eggs, yogurt, peanuts, peanut butter, and beans.
- Include a protein-containing food at each meal.

Information from www.eatright.org, Foodwise Nutritional Analysis Database.

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