



Summer 2016 Issue

We hope you're having a wonderful summer! Stay healthy for your trips to the beach by [contacting us today](#) and [making an appointment](#).

A graphic for "Gastro Fact" featuring a purple silhouette of a human figure with internal organs highlighted in red, positioned to the left of the text "Gastro Fact" in a large, bold, blue font.

Did you know...

Our liver is the largest glandular organ of the human body, its weight is around 3 pounds and is reddish-brown in color. It's the second largest organ besides skin.

HGA News

A small version of the Hunterdon Gastroenterology Associates logo is located at the bottom right of the "HGA News" section.

Meet Dr. Richard Arrigo

Hunterdon Gastroenterology Associates proudly welcomes Dr. Richard Arrigo to the practice!



Dr. Arrigo is a fellowship trained Gastroenterologist who treats diagnoses and symptoms of the digestive tract including but not limited to colon polyps and cancer, hepatitis, gastroesophageal

reflux (heartburn), peptic ulcer disease, colitis, gallbladder and biliary tract disease, nutritional problems, Irritable Bowel Syndrome (IBS), and pancreatitis.

Prior to joining HGA, Dr. Arrigo spent 2 years working for the Liver Transplant program in Newark where he managed patients with severe liver disease, cirrhosis, and all its complications. While there he also worked in the outpatient clinic managing chronic liver conditions such as fatty liver disease, Hepatitis B and C, alcohol related liver disease, and several others.

“I like to think my approach is different from others. My bedside manner is very important to me. When taking a social history, I like to know personal details about my patients so that I can see the big picture. Most importantly, I LISTEN. I truly want to get an understanding of what my patients are telling me and I want them to know that I am truly hearing them. I try to explain things in a way they can understand.”

“I hope to give my patients an answer to their problem and perhaps a cure or a way to control their chronic medical condition so they can live a better quality of life. I hope to give my patients confidence that they are in good hands.”

Dr. Arrigo loves spending his spare time with his wife, two young children and two dogs. During his down time he enjoys playing Ice and Roller hockey.



Bye Bye Hepatitis C, Hello Fatty Liver Disease!

Written by Dr. Richard Arrigo

You may have recently seen many more television commercials for new medications for Hepatitis C virus. The CDC is now recommending that everyone born during 1945 through 1965, also known as baby boomers, get a blood test for Hepatitis C. Advances in modern medicine is and has resulted in significant changes to the most common causes of Liver related disease and Cirrhosis (scar tissue or fibrosis). As Hepatitis C will soon fade away in the coming years with a simple pill, the new threat is the epidemic of obesity in the United States and significant fatty liver disease.

Nearly 78 million adults and 13 million children in the United States deal with health issues related to obesity. An entity in the medical field called the Metabolic Syndrome, is a cluster of common medical problems including Obesity, Type 2 Diabetes, elevated cholesterol and triglycerides, hypothyroidism and hypertension. This syndrome can result in significant fatty liver disease and liver injury.

What is NAFLD?

Non-alcoholic fatty liver disease is the buildup of extra fat in the liver cells that is not caused by alcohol. The liver may contain some fat, which is normal. However, if more than 5-10% of the liver weight is fat, then it is called a fatty liver (steatosis). Fatty liver disease is very common and

may go undiagnosed for many years. An estimated 15 to 20% of all Americans have some degree of fatty liver disease, making it the most prevalent liver disease in this country. Some people develop NAFLD even if they do not have risk factors such as the metabolic syndrome, rapid weight loss and poor eating habits.

What is NASH?

Fat in the liver alone could become a worrisome condition and requires evaluation by a specialist in gastrointestinal and liver disease. Elevation of certain liver function tests with fatty liver may lead to significant inflammatory changes in the liver seen on a biopsy and this entity is called NASH (non-alcoholic steatohepatitis: fat plus inflammation). NASH is a concerning condition and is on the rise as a result of metabolic syndrome. NASH can lead to cirrhosis of liver. This may ultimately result a liver transplant and cirrhosis is a risk factor for liver cancer, which unfortunately is also on the rise.

How is NAFLD/NASH Diagnosed?

NAFLD is suspected initially if blood tests show elevation of specific liver enzymes. Other etiologies require investigation and need to be ruled out, however. There may be no symptoms at all. When symptoms occur they include fatigue, loss of appetite, weakness, nausea and abdominal pain, a dull achy sensation in the right upper quadrant of the abdomen. A simple abdominal or right upper quadrant ultrasound can be used to confirm diagnosis. CT scan and MRI abdominal imaging can also be performed. NASH is a histological diagnosis, which means it requires a liver biopsy to see inflammation of the hepatocytes (liver cells) with steatosis (fat) under the microscope. Some newer blood testing is also available and helpful. Advanced liver disease or cirrhosis from NASH may present with jaundice (yellowing of skin or eyes), new onset lower extremity edema or abdominal swelling (ascites) and even mental slowing or confusion.

What can you do to prevent and treat fatty liver disease?

Eating a healthy diet and exercising regularly can help prevent liver damage from starting and can even reverse changes of fatty liver once diagnosed.

- Control your Diabetes and work closely with your primary physician or endocrinologist to lower your A1C level.
- If you are overweight or obese, lose weight.
- Avoid heavy alcohol use.
- Lower your cholesterol and triglycerides.
- Control your blood pressure.
- Manage your hypothyroid condition.
- If you are diagnosed with NASH, control and manage the above tightly.
- See a trained specialist with expertise in gastrointestinal and liver diseases as certain medications and anti-inflammatory agents are available.

If you have further questions or suspect you may have a gastrointestinal condition, call Hunterdon Gastroenterology Associates at 908.483.4000 to schedule an appointment.

[Call us today!](#)

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