

About 1.5 billion people around the world have chronic liver disease today. At Pioneer GI Clinic in Anchorage, Alaska, the caring liver disease specialists can help you find solutions that improve your quality of life dramatically. Liver disease doesn't have to mean a miserable life.

What is liver disease?

Liver disease encompasses a group of diseases occurring in your liver, the organ that helps you digest food and remove toxins from your body. Many diseases can alter your liver function, leading to serious and potentially life-threatening issues.

What are the types of liver disease?

There are dozens of different liver diseases. Among the main ones are:

Liver inflammation

Liver inflammation (hepatitis A, B, and C) commonly occurs because of a virus. But it can also develop with long-term alcohol abuse (alcoholic hepatitis).

Inherited liver disease

Some examples of inherited liver diseases include Wilson's disease, hemochromatosis, cystic fibrosis, and alpha-1 antitrypsin deficiency.

Liver cancer

Liver cancer usually starts in the liver itself but can also originate in the bile ducts outside the liver. Cancer of this type can also start in other nearby organs, like the pancreas, large intestine, or lungs.

Chronic liver disease often leads to fibrosis, in which your body produces extra cells along with proteins like collagen. The collagen can then harden, binding the tissue and causing scar tissue buildup. The scar tissue can prevent your liver from getting the blood it needs.

Untreated fibrosis can eventually lead to cirrhosis (severe scarring of the liver) and liver failure. However, if you pursue treatment early in the course of your liver disease, you can prevent liver failure.

What are the signs of liver disease?

Liver disease can cause wide-ranging symptoms, as it can vary from one disease to another. Some of the symptoms to watch for include:

- Jaundice: Yellowish tint in your eyes or skin
- Abdominal pain, often on the right side
- Poor appetite
- Unexpected weight loss
- Chronic fatigue
- Fluid retention, causing swelling in your lower legs and feet
- Light-colored stools
- Dark-colored urine
- Itchy skin
- Tendency to bruise easily
- Nausea
- Vomiting

Liver disease doesn't always cause symptoms; some people only learn about their diagnosis through routine blood tests.

How is liver disease treated?

The treatment of liver disease is highly customized based on the particular disease, your symptoms, the stage of the disease, your general health, your prognosis, and other individual factors.

Pioneer GI Clinic provides disease-specific medication, lifestyle support, weight loss guidance, help with quitting drinking, and other treatments to help you enjoy a better quality of life with a long life span.

For compassionate liver disease care, call Pioneer GI Clinic.