How to Improve Liver Function Naturally

After the festive season it is now time to get yourself back on track to enjoy good health and vitality.

Step 1. Eat an Anti-inflammatory Diet

A low-sugar, low-toxin diet that’s filled with high-fiber foods is crucial for supporting your liver. High amounts of antioxidants and fiber can even reverse liver damage and disease.

The liver is the main organ for detoxification, since it removes toxins created both inside and outside of your body. When the liver can’t remove harmful substances, the immune system can perceive the rising level of toxins as a threat, which causes inflammation and autoimmune reactions. Food allergies and sensitives or leaky gut syndrome can also become more likely.

An influx of sugar — from foods like refined grains, sugary snacks and sweetened drinks — puts a lot on pressure on your liver to convert and store glucose. When blood sugar levels rise, the hormone insulin causes your liver to store glycogen. At the same time, your liver tries to respond to not enough carbohydrates entering the body by releasing stored glycogen back into the blood when you need it for energy.

Nitrates in processed meats, hydrogenated oils, refined vegetable oils and artificial sweeteners/ingredients are also taxing.

The solution? Keep things balanced by eating real, whole foods (preferably organic), including unrefined sources of carbohydrates, veggies, fruits and healthy fats. When it comes to fats and proteins in your diet, focus on quality sources (cage-free eggs, grass-fed meat or wild-caught seafood, for example) so the liver can properly break down fats and remove excess cholesterol and toxins.

While many mainstream “detox diets” sold commercially might not offer the benefits they promise, choosing organic foods is one of the few proven ways to lower pesticide levels in the body. Organic, high-antioxidant foods fight the negative effects of stress, pollution and a poor diet on the health of your liver, while increasing natural liver detoxification and the ability to flush toxins out through urine.

Some of the best anti-inflammatory foods for liver function include:

- **Sour foods** — Bitterness is usually a sign that beneficial enzymes are present, which nourish the liver and also other digestive organs like the spleen and gallbladder. Sour foods are high in essential minerals that balance fluids and reduce heavy metals within the blood. Probiotic Foods (like kombucha, kefir, cultured vegetables) plus bitter green vegetables (mustard greens, chicory, arugula, dandelion, etc.) are loaded with nutrients and probiotics. Bitter-tasting leafy greens, like collards or Swiss chard, raise levels of glutathione.

- **Leafy greens** — Green vegetables of all kinds come loaded with anti-inflammatory and antioxidant properties, which help nourish the liver, along with potassium, which is tied to liver health. Many also increase levels of glutathione, a vital component in the destruction of free radicals within the body. As people age or experience illnesses, this becomes even more important since antioxidant and glutathione levels in the blood naturally decrease with age.

- **Cruciferous veggies and grasses** — Green grasses (like chlorella, barley or wheat grass) hold a form of chlorophyll, a structure that’s built into plant cells that helps escort damaging substances like dioxin out of the liver, while increasing antioxidants like superoxide dismutase. And cruciferous veggies (broccoli, kale, cage, etc.) improve low potassium levels and contain indole.
compounds, a byproduct that’s known to be a cancer killer and eliminate carcinogens from the body. Cruciferous vegetables can increase production of digestive enzymes called glucosinolates, protein that helps detoxify the liver and increase the liver’s ability to usher out carcinogens and heavy metals from the blood.

- **Fresh herbs** — Herbs including turmeric, coriander, parsley, cilantro and oregano are great to boost glutathione production and also lower inflammation. Highly potent flavors and aromatic smells of herbs are a sign of beneficial essential oils in certain herbs. Turmeric contains curcumin, a compound helpful in restoring healthy blood pressure, improving circulation and fighting toxin buildup. Other herbs balance the body’s pH level and increases digestive enzymes. Raw garlic is another great option since allicin compounds found in garlic have long been regarded as powerful antimicrobial agents that lower inflammation (including in the liver) while increasing circulation and healthy blood flow.

- **High-antioxidant fruits** — Fruits like berries and melons provide and balance electrolyte minerals needed by the liver, including magnesium, calcium and potassium. In addition, they’re beneficial for improving healthy circulation by acting similar to hemoglobin.

- **Local raw honey** — Raw honey is the kind that’s not heated or refined. It’s a natural antibacterial, antimicrobial and antifungal product. It helps lower liver inflammation and eliminate bacteria, parasites and viral infections, especially when you source it locally. It also nourishes the digestive tract and improves liver and gut health.

- **Green tea** — Green tea, especially concentrated, powdered green matcha tea, is known to contain powerful compounds known as catechins that act as antioxidants in the body, combatting free radicals within the blood, reducing liver inflammation and lowering the effects of oxidative stress on the digestive organs.

- **Coconut oil** — Considered one of the best sources of medium-chain fatty acids (MCFAs), coconut oil contains beneficial healthy fats, including lauric acid. Acids found in MCFA have antifungal, antimicrobial and antiviral properties that help the liver detox, reduce cravings for unhealthy foods and support energy levels.

- **Apple cider vinegar** — A fermented product made by combining apple juice with live bacteria in the form of yeast, apple cider vinegar contains beneficial enzymes and antioxidants, such as acetic acid and malic acid. These balance the pH level within the body — establishing a healthy ratio of acid to alkalinity — which nourishes the liver and other organs within the digestive tract, helping cleanse the body.

**The worst foods for your liver include:**
- too much alcohol or caffeine
- packaged goods that contain refined vegetable oils, artificial ingredients, sweeteners and colors
- fruits and vegetables heavily sprayed with chemical pesticides and herbicides (non-organic crops)
- factory-farmed animal products, farm-raised fish or conventional dairy (that has been pasteurized and homogenized)
- sugary drinks and snacks
- refined grains