



GastroDoxs
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Autoimmune Hepatitis

A Practical Guide For Patients

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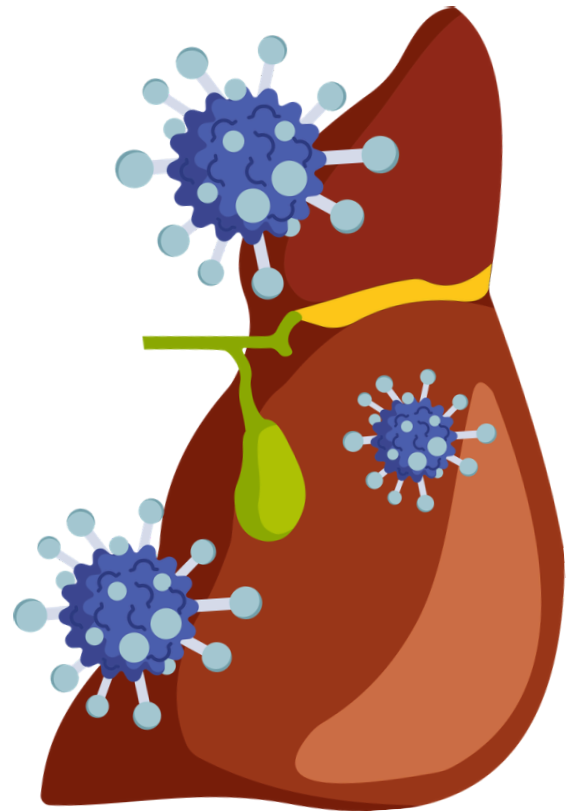
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Introduction: **Autoimmune Hepatitis**

Autoimmune hepatitis is a chronic liver disease that occurs when the body's immune system mistakenly attacks healthy liver cells, leading to inflammation and potential liver damage. If left untreated, it can progress to cirrhosis or liver failure. While the exact cause is not fully understood, it is believed to involve a combination of genetic, environmental, and immune system factors. Early diagnosis and ongoing treatment can help control inflammation, protect liver function, and prevent serious complications.



Key Takeaways

- A condition where the immune system attacks the liver.
- Causes liver inflammation and, if untreated, long-term damage.
- More common in women, but can affect anyone.
- Lifelong monitoring and treatment may be needed.
- Early treatment can prevent progression to cirrhosis.



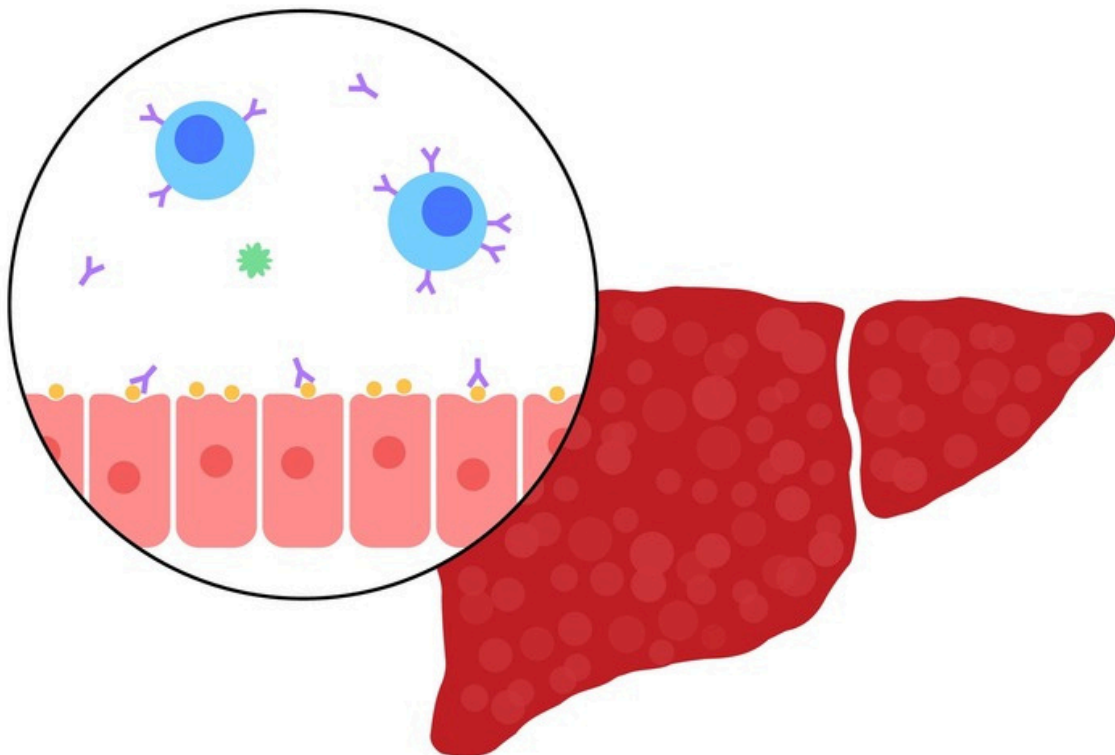
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What Causes **Autoimmune Hepatitis**?

Known Causes

The exact cause is unknown, but it's thought to result from an overactive immune response triggered by genetic susceptibility and environmental factors such as certain viruses or medications. Women and people with other autoimmune diseases have a higher risk.

AUTOIMMUNE HEPATITIS



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Common Signs & Symptoms

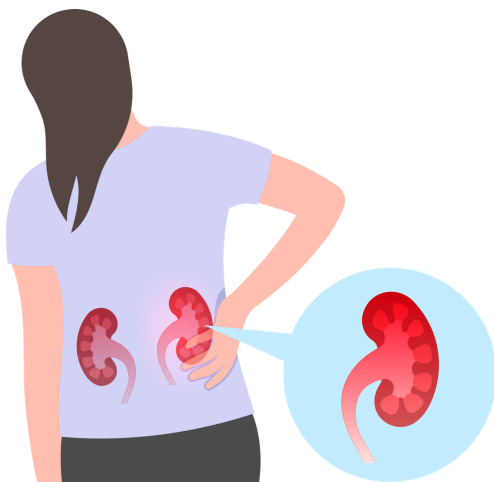
Symptoms may include fatigue, jaundice, abdominal discomfort, joint pain, nausea, loss of appetite, and in some cases, no noticeable symptoms until the disease is advanced.

Core Symptoms Include:

- Fatigue or weakness
- Yellowing of the skin and eyes (jaundice)
- Abdominal pain or swelling
- Joint pain
- Loss of appetite
- Nausea or vomiting



Severe cases can also cause:



- Dark urine and pale stools
- Itchy skin
- Fluid buildup in the abdomen (ascites)
- Confusion or disorientation (hepatic encephalopathy)
- Cirrhosis
- Liver failure



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Diagnosis & Medical Testing

Diagnosis involves reviewing symptoms, medical history, and blood tests for liver function and autoimmune markers, along with imaging and sometimes liver biopsy to confirm inflammation and rule out other causes.

Diagnostic Tools

- **Blood tests** – Liver function tests, autoimmune antibody screening
- **Immunoglobulin G (IgG) levels** – Elevated in autoimmune hepatitis
- **Ultrasound** – Check liver size and structure
- **MRI/CT scan** – Identify complications or other causes
- **Liver biopsy** – Confirms diagnosis and measures damage



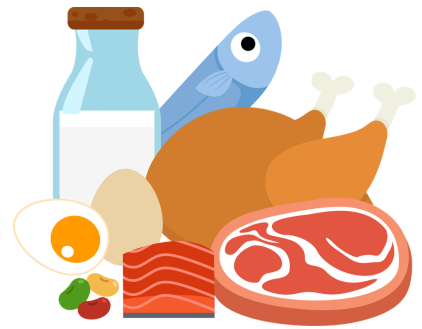
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Diet

A liver-friendly diet includes fresh fruits, vegetables, lean proteins, and whole grains while avoiding alcohol, high-fat foods, and excessive sugar to reduce liver strain.

Key Insights

- **Eat plenty of fresh produce daily**
- **Choose lean protein sources like poultry, fish, and legumes**



- **Avoid alcohol entirely**
- **Limit fried and processed foods**
- **Reduce added sugars**
- **Stay hydrated with water and herbal teas**



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Medications & Treatment Options

Treatment usually involves corticosteroids and immune-suppressing drugs to reduce inflammation, prevent liver damage, and maintain remission. Long-term monitoring is often necessary.

Treatment Options

- **Corticosteroids (prednisone)** – Reduce liver inflammation
- **Azathioprine** – Suppresses immune system activity
- **Other immunosuppressants** – For resistant cases
- **Treatment of complications** – Cirrhosis, ascites, or encephalopathy
- **Liver transplant evaluation** – For end-stage disease



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Advanced Therapies & Procedures

Advanced treatment may involve combination immunosuppressive therapy, biologic drugs under research, and liver transplantation for severe, treatment-resistant autoimmune hepatitis.

Therapy Options

- **Combination immunosuppressive therapy** – For better control
- **Biologic therapies** – In clinical trials for autoimmune control
- **Liver transplant** – For irreversible liver damage
- **Endoscopic procedures** – Manage complications like varices
- **Nutritional therapy** – Support during advanced disease stages



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Coping With **Autoimmune Hepatitis**

Coping involves taking medications as prescribed, avoiding alcohol, eating a healthy diet, managing stress, and keeping up with regular medical check-ups and lab monitoring.

Practical Strategies

- Follow treatment and medication schedules closely

- Avoid alcohol and liver-toxic drugs



- Eat balanced, nutrient-rich meals

- Manage stress through relaxation techniques



- Keep regular doctor visits



- Join a liver disease support group



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FAQS About Autoimmune Hepatitis



Q1: Is autoimmune hepatitis curable?

A: It can be controlled but not completely cured; lifelong monitoring and treatment are often needed.

Q2: Can lifestyle changes replace medication?

A: No, but they can complement medical treatment and help protect liver health.

Q3: How is autoimmune hepatitis different from viral hepatitis?

A: It's caused by an immune system attack, not an infection.

Q4: Can autoimmune hepatitis lead to liver failure?

A: Yes, if untreated or not well-controlled, it can progress to cirrhosis and liver failure.



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Take **Action**

If you experience autoimmune hepatitis, don't ignore them. Early diagnosis and treatment can prevent complications. Schedule a consultation with GastroDoxs for expert guidance on managing your digestive health.

Visit GastroDoxs.com to schedule an appointment and access more resources on digestive health.

**Your health matters—
take the next step today!**

SCHEDULE AN APPOINTMENT

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