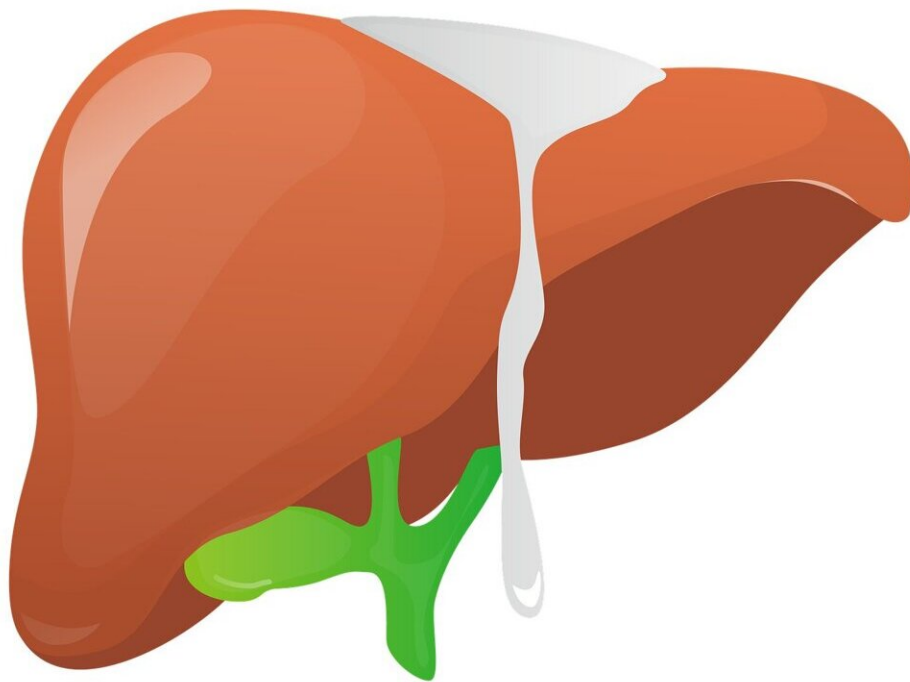


# More cardiovascular disease found in lean people with NAFLD than in those who are overweight

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Those with a normal body mass index (BMI) with non-alcoholic fatty liver disease (NAFLD) are more likely to have cardiovascular disease

than those who are overweight or living with obesity, according to research selected for presentation at Digestive Disease Week (DDW) 2022. Roughly 25 percent of adults in the U.S. have NAFLD, a term for various conditions of the liver that affect those who drink little to no alcohol.

This link to [cardiovascular disease](#) was found even though lean patients were less likely to have cirrhosis, diabetes, [high cholesterol](#) or [high blood pressure](#).

"Our team had expected to see that those with a normal BMI would have a lower prevalence of any metabolic or [cardiovascular conditions](#), so we were very surprised to find this link to cardiovascular disease," said Karn Wijarnpreecha, MD, MPH, lead researcher of the study and transplant hepatology fellow at the University of Michigan. "Too often, we overlook NAFLD patients with a normal BMI because we assume their risk for more serious conditions is lower than those who are overweight. But this way of thinking may be putting these patients at risk."

The main characteristic of NAFLD is having too much fat stored in the [liver cells](#). It typically has no symptoms and can lead to other dangerous conditions, such as diabetes, cardiovascular disease, and cirrhosis of the liver.

While NAFLD is more common in people who are overweight or living with obesity, it is also found in people who have a normal BMI. Yet, there is little-to-no research done on this population's associated conditions in relation to the condition.

Researchers conducted a retrospective cohort study of more than 10,000 adults diagnosed with NAFLD at the University of Michigan Hospital from 2012 to 2021 to compare the prevalence of cirrhosis, cardiovascular diseases, [metabolic diseases](#), and [chronic kidney disease](#)

among four classes of patients: lean (BMI= 18.5 to 24.9), overweight (BMI=25-29.9), class 1 obesity (BMI=30-34.9), and class 2-3 obesity (BMI=35-

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