How Nutrition Can Impact the Risk of Advanced Liver Disease (NEW STUDY) Transcript

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Study Overview and MAFLD Background

Here we have a new study looking at how diet can affect the risk of advanced liver disease, and this includes in people with metabolic dysfunction-associated fatty liver diseases to begin with, which affects nearly 40% of the adult American population.

And I will be calling that MAFLD for short because it's a mouthful. The study included over 175,000 people WITH MAFLD and over 284,00 people without it in the UK Biobank cohort.

Cohort Size and Dietary Pattern Analysis

The researchers also assessed their diets using nine different dietary pattern scores. They found that those with MAFLD to begin with had a higher risk of chronic liver disease, severe liver diseases, liver cancer, and liver related death compared to those without MAFLD.

But that's not all that surprising since their liver was clearly in worse shape to start with.

MAFLD and Higher Liver Disease Risk

As for dietary patterns, those who had higher Mediterranean, planetary diet, healthy plant-based or plant based low carb diet scores had lower risk for some of these advanced liver disorders.

And each of these dietary patterns share many similarities, including a focus on healthy plant foods like vegetables and nuts.

Healthy Diet Patterns Linked to Lower Risk

But on the contrary, higher unhealthy plant-based diet index scores, so these could be diets that are rich in things like sodas and potato chips, were associated with a higher risk of most of those outcomes.

Also notable, animal-base low-carb diets were not associated a significant reduction in risk, like the plant based low carb diets. However, the most important results in my opinion are the effects of diet on people with pre-existing MAFLD specifically.

Findings in People With Pre-Existing MAFLD

And the results were fairly similar to the main analysis with those healthy plant predominant dietary patterns being associated with a lower risk of worsening of liver health to more advanced disease.

So in those with the very common condition of MAFLD, it may not be too late to shift towards a healthier diet to reduce the risk or worse outcomes down the road.