



NHS

**University Hospitals
Birmingham
NHS Foundation Trust**



Dietitian Assessment for Liver Transplant

Liver
Transplant



B I R M I N G H A M

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Who we are

Dietitians are trained professionals who aim to use nutrition to improve health and support the treatment of medical conditions.

As part of your liver transplant assessment, you will see a specialist liver dietitian. The dietitians work alongside all other healthcare professionals in the liver transplant team.

The role of the dietitian is to provide education on how nutrition can support you to be ready for a liver transplant. We aim to give nutritional advice which is practical and personalised.

This guide will give you an overview of the key things dietitians will assess and what they mean.

This guide focuses on:

- Weight, muscle size and function
- Signs and symptoms you may experience
- Bowel habits
- Diet history – an overview of what you eat and drink

Weight, muscle mass and function

The dietitian will assess and monitor trends in your weight, body composition and function.

Body Composition

When there are changes in weight due to fluid in the body, it can sometimes hide changes in muscle and/or fat. To overcome this, we take two arm measurements which will provide a more sensitive marker to any muscle and fat changes.

Measurements

Mid-arm circumference

The midpoint of your arm is found and then a tape measure is used to calculate the width of your arm. This measurement can be used to show trends and can be monitored to show changes in dry weight.

Triceps skin fold

Skin fold callipers are used to pinch the skin on your arm and give a measurement. This measurement helps to estimate the skin which separates from the muscle in the arm, and this is used to check trends in fat and weight over time.

Together, these scores are used to calculate mid arm muscle circumference (MAMC) which helps to find if any changes in weight are due to increase in fat mass or muscle mass.

For your appointment, we recommend wearing a short sleeve shirt or t-shirt to more easily take these measurements.

Function and Power

Good nutrition can improve your body's energy availability, and this can affect the power in your arms and legs. The dietitians will use 3 measures to assess function and power:

Hand grip strength

This will help to show the power and strength in your arm. We will ask you to perform this test 3 times, squeezing with your left and right hand.

Sit-to-Stand

This test helps to show your lower body strength and power. We will ask you to perform 5 sit-to-stands as fast as you can.

Balance

This test helps assess balance and muscle strength. We will ask you to hold each position for 10 seconds.

The dietitian may ask questions about your activity levels at home, any structured exercise you may do and how you get on with day-to-day activities (e.g. cooking, walking, cleaning, work).

Together, this information is used alongside the scores for power and strength to help provide you with a tailored nutrition plan. These assessments will be repeated in follow up appointments with the dietitian to check for any changes.

For your appointment, we recommend wearing comfortable leg wear and shoes to support the assessment.

Signs and symptoms

The dietitian may look out for specific signs and symptoms you may be experiencing, which may be affected by your nutrition. It may be that some symptoms caused by your liver disease, for example, requiring the draining of fluid from your abdomen, may further increase the need for more protein.

You should tell us about any changes or symptoms from the list below in your assessment process with the transplant team.

Skin breakdown and delayed wound healing

Not having enough energy, protein, vitamin and minerals can lead to a breakdown in skin, and it can take longer for cuts and bruises to heal over time.

Feeling cold

When the body does not receive enough energy and protein from food, it can start to break down muscle. This can lead to extra heat

losses from the body and make us start to feel cold.

Bowels

As liver disease progresses, it can sometimes affect bowel movements. During your assessment, the dietitian will ask you about your bowels, specifically:

1. The number of times you open your bowels (have a poo) each day
2. The consistency of your poo – is it well formed or loose (diarrhoea)
3. The colour – is it a regular brown colour or are you noticing any changes

Red flags

As liver disease progresses, it can sometimes affect how the body produces and transports the bile or enzymes that are needed to break down food. It is important to check for any of the symptoms below and tell us as early as possible. Contact your dietitian, consultant, or specialist nurse if you begin to experience any symptoms below:

- Clay like, yellow/pale or loose watery stools (poo)
- Bloating, sickness, nausea
- Excess foul-smelling wind
- Urgency to go to the toilet after you eat a meal
- Constipation/difficulty have a poo, for multiple days

Diet recall

Food and nutrition are personal to everyone. So that the dietitian can provide a personal approach to your diet, and give the best advice to suit your lifestyle, you will be asked to complete a diet recall.

This will help the dietitian to understand the types of foods you like or dislike and what your dietary habits are on a typical day. This information can be used to make sure you are getting all the nutrients you need to support the condition you are living with.

Try to keep a record of your food habits 3 days before your

assessment. Include types of food, portion sizes, and the time you eat to help us provide a thorough assessment.

Food Diary		
Day	Breakfast	Lunch
1		
2		
3		
4		
5		
6		
7		

Food Diary continued

Day	Dinner	Snacks
1		
2		
3		
4		
5		
6		
7		

Day	Bowels	Other symptoms
Monday		
Tuesday		
Wednesday		
Thursday		
Friday		
Saturday		
Sunday		

Day	Bowels	Other symptoms
Monday		
Tuesday		
Wednesday		
Thursday		
Friday		
Saturday		
Sunday		

Please use the space below to write down any questions you may have and bring this with you to your next appointment.

How did we do? 😊 😐 😞

If you have recently used our services we'd love to hear about your experience. Please scan the QR code or follow the link to share your feedback to help us improve our services. **Thank you.**

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