

Watch lifestyle & diet to keep liver healthy

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Sonarpur: Fatty liver diseases have been on the rise among non-alcoholics because of lifestyle and food habits and doctors warn ignoring early signs could lead to diseases that can kill.

Doctors said there is no medicine yet to treat non-alcoholic fatty liver diseases (NAFLD) and the only way out is non-medicinal intervention such as lifestyle and dietary changes. Consuming non-junk and less sugary food and regular exercise, are some of the ways to arrest the condition.

If the condition keeps worsening, fatty liver may even lead to cirrhosis and liver transplant may be needed to cure a patient. "About 20 per cent of the global population has fatty liver, 60 per cent of them non-alcoholics," said Abhijit Chowdhury, the secretary of the West Bengal Liver Foundation and the man behind the Indian Institute of Liver and Digestive Sciences in Sonarpur.

A doctor attending a symposium on non-alcoholic fatty



Avijit Chowdhury (centre) and Andrew Peterson at the cell biology lab inaugurated at the Indian Institute of Liver and Digestive Sciences in Sonarpur on Tuesday. The lab has been set up with help from MedGenome, a genomics-driven research and diagnostic company. Picture by Sanjoy Chattopadhyaya

liver diseases at the Sonarpur hospital said 10 years ago most of his patients with fatty liver were people who consumed alcohol. But now an increasing number of people who do not drink regularly are being diagnosed with the condition.

"NAFLD is a benign stage of fatty liver but if ignored and allowed to worsen, it may lead to NASH. Further deterioration can cause cirrhosis when liver transplant may become

necessary," said Andrew Peterson, the principal scientist of Genentech, a pharmaceutical company in the US.

Chowdhury warned that India could become the global capital of NASH in future. "Indians are genetically predisposed to fatty liver. Lifestyle and food habits add to this."

Non-alcoholic steatohepatitis (NASH) is reversible and timely intervention is essential, a doctor said.