

Mayo Clinic Minute: Dual procedure combines liver transplant, bariatric surgery

Mayo Clinic surgeons have found that an [innovative approach](#) can help patients with obesity get lifesaving care. Obesity can be a barrier to liver transplant. In a recent study, [Dr. Julie Heimbach](#), director of the [Mayo Clinic Transplant Center](#) in Rochester, Minnesota, found that combining gastric sleeve surgery with liver transplantation was effective in addressing both health issues.

This [dual procedure](#) is especially helpful for patients with metabolic dysfunction-associated steatotic liver disease (MASLD), formerly known as nonalcoholic fatty liver disease. MASLD happens when fat builds up in the liver, often without symptoms. It's mostly caused by obesity — defined as a body mass index (BMI) of 30 or higher. In advanced stages, MASLD can lead to serious liver damage that requires a transplant.

Video.	Audio
Julie Heimbach, M.D. Transplantation Surgery Mayo Clinic	"Metabolic-associated steatotic liver disease is the most common liver disease, not only in the United States but worldwide.
	As obesity rates rise, so does the need to treat patients with MASLD, says Mayo Clinic's Dr. Julie Heimbach.
	"When we have excess fat that builds up in the liver, this can lead to inflammation and scarring and even advanced liver disease."
	It won't cause complications for everyone, but, for some, it can progress to cirrhosis.
	"When a patient develops cirrhosis , they can then need a liver transplant."
	And having extra weight can be a reason patients might not be eligible for transplant. At Mayo Clinic, the approach is to help patients with obesity as well as transplant.
	"We consider both liver transplant and what's called a sleeve gastrectomy, which is a type of weight-loss operation that can be used as a tool to help patients be successful in managing not only their liver disease with a liver transplant, but their obesity with the sleeve gastrectomy."
	The procedures are done simultaneously with multiple teams working together.
	"I'm excited about is what transplant offers to all of our patients, which is to be able to return to the life that they had before they got sick. And for patients who were carrying extra weight, not only are they healthy again, but now they're able to really fully enjoy and be fully participating in their life."
	For the Mayo Clinic News Network, I'm Joel Streed.