

# The Management of Gout & CV Risk

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# Disclosures 2024/5

**Speaker Fees:** AstraZeneca, Bayer, Boehringer Ingelheim, Dexcom, Daiichi Sankyo, Grunenthal, Lilly, Menarini, Idorsia, Thornton & Ross, Boston Scientific

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Identification and Management of People with MASLD and MASH in Primary Care

# Medscape # UK X Guidelines Primary Care Hacks

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# What Is MASLD?[1-7]

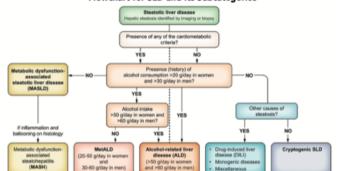
- There has been recent international consensus to rename nonalcoholic fatty liver disease (NAFLD) to improve awareness and patient identification and reduce stigma;<sup>41</sup> using this terminology, the EASL, the EASD, and the EASD produced an updated guideline in 2024<sup>21</sup>
- NAFLD is now termed metabolic dysfunction-associated steatotic liver disease (MASLD)<sup>III</sup>
- MASLD encompasses individuals who have hepatic steatosis and at least one cardiometabolic risk factor<sup>(3)</sup>
- Metabolic dysfunction-associated steatohepatitis (MASH) replaces nonalcoholic steatohepatitis (NASH)<sup>III</sup> MASH is defined by inflammatic of hepatocytes and carries a risk of progression to fibrosis, cirrhosis, and HCOM
- MetALD describes individuals with MASLD who consume more than recommended amounts of alcohol per week (defined as 3.75–7.50 units/day [30–60 g/day] in men and 2.50–6.25 units/day [20–50 g/day] in women)<sup>[2]</sup>
- o for all adults in the UK, the recommended alcohol intake is ≤14 units/week (i.e. 112 g/week, or 2.0 units/day [16 g/day]), best spread evenly over ≥3 days<sup>IR</sup>
- MASLD is primarily a metabolic disease heavily influenced by lifestyle factors, and is the liver's manifestation of the MetS alongside hypertension, insulin resistance and dysglycaemia, dyslipidaemia, and obesity/increased waist circumference.<sup>8/2</sup>

- Cardiometabolic Risk Factors<sup>[2,8,9]</sup>
- BMI ≥25 kg/m<sup>2</sup> (23 kg/m<sup>2</sup> if high-risk ethnic minority) or waist circumference ≥94 cm (37.0 inches) for men (≥90 cm (35.4 inches) in men of South Asian or Chinese ethnicity, or ≥85 cm (33.5 inches) in men of Japanese ethnicity) or ≥80 cm (31.5 inches) for women of all ethnicities
- HbA<sub>1c</sub> 39–47 mmol/mol, fasting plasma glucose of 5.6–6.9 mmol/l (100–125 mg/dl), or 2-hour plasma glucose during OGTT of 7.8–11 mmol/l (140–199 mg/dl), or established T2D
- BP ≥130/85 mmHg or antihypertensive drug treatment
- Plasma triglycerides ≥1.70 mmol/l or lipid-lowering treatment
- Plasma HDL-cholesterol ≤1.0 mmol/l in men, ≤1.30 mmol/l in women, or lipid-lowering treatment.

# Secondary Causes of Hepatic Steatosis<sup>[2,8,10]</sup>

- Drug-induced liver injury, e.g. amiodarone, methotrexate, tamoxifen, and corticosteroids
- Endocrine disorders, such as hypothyroidism, PCOS, panhypopituitarism, or growth hormone deficiency
- Nutrient deficiency or malnutrition, such as from acute weight loss due to bariatric surgery or fasting, total parenteral nutrition, or small intestinal bacterial overgrowth

Chronic hepatitis C virus infection.



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Note: 50 g of alcohol equates to 6.25 units, and 60 g equates to 7.5 units.

# Screening for MASLD in Primary Care<sup>[2,14]</sup>

- The appearance of steatosis on abdominal USS is operator-dependent and a normal USS does not rule out MASLD<sup>[14]</sup>
- Consider case-finding strategies for MASLD with liver fibrosis in those who have abnormal liver enzymes, cardiometabolic risk factors, and/or incidental radiological signs of hepatic steatosis<sup>34</sup>
- The EASL, the EASD, and the EASO recommend looking for MASLD with liver fibrosis in individuals with one or more of the following:<sup>p1</sup>
- o T2D
- abdominal obesity and ≥1 additional metabolic risk factor
- abnormal liver blood test results.
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# How Common and Serious

Is MASLD?[2,11-13]

- MASLD is now the most common liver disorder in Western countries, and has been estimated to affect up to 30% of adults in the UK<sup>(11,12)</sup> • MASH has been estimated to affect up to 5% of the
- UK population<sup>[11]</sup>
- MASLD (specifically progressive MASH) is the fastest growing
- MASH) is the fastest growing indication for liver transplantation in Western countries<sup>[13]</sup>
- MASLD is also associated with an increased prevalence and incidence of CVD<sup>[2]</sup>
- CVD is a more common cause of death than liver disease in MASLD<sup>[2]</sup>
- MASLD is highly prevalent in people living with T2D.<sup>[2]</sup>

# **Useful Resources**

- The EASL:
- <u>Non-alcoholic fatty liver disease</u> (NAFLD): how you can reduce the risk for your liver and for other health issues?</u>

medscape.co.uk/guidelines



# Flowchart for SLD and Its Subcategories<sup>[2]</sup>

# Interpreting Liver Blood Tests in Primary Care

Medscape # UK X Guidelines Primary Care Hacks

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LB's have traditionally been referred to as liver function tests (LFIs). However, typical LB's include measurement of both hepatobilary enzymes (e.g. ALT and AST) and markers of liver function (e.g. albumin and clotting factors)<sup>1/2</sup> Additionally, many individuals with abnormal LBTs have normal liver function.<sup>1/2</sup> Therefore, to avoid confusion and over-investigation.<sup>1</sup> LBT is not not performed terminology.<sup>1/2</sup>

## Key Messages

<ol> <li>Standard LBTs usually comprise ALT, AST, ALP, GGT, total bilirubin, and serum albumin</li> <li>Abnormal LBTs are very common in primary care!</li> <li>LBTs should only be checked when specifically indicated by the clinical situation</li> <li>Interpretation of abnormal LBTs should be individualised and in clinical context</li> <li>Abnormal LBTs are likely to remain abnormal on repeat testing</li> </ol>	<ol> <li>Common patterns of abnormal LBTs are often more helpful than individual markers</li> <li>GGT is useful in determining whether raised ALP is o bone or liver origin</li> <li>Isolated raised bilirubin is commonly caused by Gilbe syndrome, but haemolysis should be excluded</li> <li>Always consider a possible pharmacological cause for</li> </ol>
	abnormal LBTs 10. Liver enzymes are a poor guide to the development of ALD.

### 1. Commonly Requested LBTs<sup>[1,3-9]</sup>

### ALT level varies with age, gender, ethnicity, BMI, illness, and exercise

Test Notes

- Recent consensus suggests that the current ULN for ALT is too low; updated EASL-EASD-EASO guidance on MASLD<sup>97</sup> suggests that an individual has elevated ALT if >33 U/I in makes and >25 U/I in females (usual normal range 10–50 U/I in both men and women). Not as liver-specific as ALT; however, in ALD, AST is a more sensitive marker of liver injury than ALT
- May be elevated in ML or myositis. . The De Ritis/ASTALT ratio may be useful in elevated aminotransferase levels, as most causes of liver injury are associated with a greater increase in ALT than AST. AST
- AST:ALT <1 (i.e. AST<ALT) is suggestive of MASLD, chronic viral hepatitis B or C, or acute hepatocellular injury AST:ALT ≥2 is associated with ALD, cirrhosis (e.g. in MASH), drug-induced liver injury, and primary liver malignancy
   AST:ALT ≥5 warrants suspicion of possible extrahepatic causes (e.g. MI, myositis), particularly if ALT levels are normal.
- ALP is elevated in cholestatic liver disease (e.g. PBC, drug-induced liver injury), extrahepatic biliary obstruction (e.g. galistones, pancreatic cancer), bone
  disease (e.g. bony metastases, vitamin D deficiency, Paget's disease, bone fractures), renal osteodystrophy, and hepatic congestion caused by right-sided HF
- ALP ALP is also higher in pregnancy because of placental production, and in adolescence because of increased bone turnover. • Raised by multiple factors, particularly excessive alcohol consumption, obesity, and various drugs (e.g. paracetamol. phenytoin, sodium valproate)
- Mid elevations are nonspecific, and isolated increases rarely indicate liver disease
   Can also be raised in a range of nonhepatic conditions (e.g. COPD or CKD), and for several weeks after acute MI GGT Despite its low specificity for liver disease, GGT is one of the best predictors of mortality in those with established liver disease GGT is useful in determining whether raised ALP is of bone or liver origin (see 7. Interpreting Raised ALP).

Initial testing usually reports total bilirubin (including both unconjugated and conjugated fractions)

- Unconjugated hyperbilirubinaemia is increased primarily in Gilbert's syndrome and RBC breakdown (i.e. haemolysis) (see 8. Isolated Raised Bilirubin)
   Conjugated hyperbilirubinaemia is usually caused by impaired liver processing or bile flow, e.g. from hepatitis, drug-induced cholestasis, or biliary obstructio Bilirubin (e.g. by gallstones or malignancy). Serum albumin is a marker of synthetic liver function; levels are usually reduced in liver failure but may still be normal in severe acute liver damage, as the
- half-life of albumin in plasma is around 20 days Albumin . Levels are also reduced in sepsis, malnutrition, systemic inflammatory disorders, malabsorption, nephrotic syndrome, GI protein loss, acute infection, and HF

. In the absence of other abnormal LBTs, low serum albumin is unlikely to be of liver origin.

 In the presence of significant liver injury (usually >70% loss of synthetic function), production is reduced and PT prolonged/NR raised · Prolonged PT/raised INR can also be caused by warfarin therapy, or by vitamin K deficiency in fat malabsorption or chronic cholestasis INR . In the presence of otherwise normal LBTs, prolonged PT is unlikely to be of liver origin.

Platelet reduction is also an indicator of advanced liver disease; this is the result of a multifactorial mechanism involving bone marrow suppression, hypersplenism (secondary to ortal hypertension), and subsequent splenic sequestration

Note: the standard set of LBTs differs between areas. The BSG recommends assessing bilirubin, albumin, ALT, ALP, and GGT when first investigating potential liver disease, with an FBC 'if not already performed within the previous 12 months'<sup>[1]</sup>

Alternational Altern

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# LBTs are regularly checked for unexplained or nonspecific symptoms, almost as a measure of wellbeing

in this context, >20% will have abnormal LBTs, and most of these individuals will not have significant liver disease? Moreover, the degree of LBT abnormality does not always correlate with disease severity LBTs may be normal even in advanced liver disease, and are often abnormal in the absence of significant underlying liver disease Therefore, interpreting LBTs in isolation is not helpful when diagnosing or ruling out liver disease, and additional history-taking, examination, and/or investigation is usually required (see 4. History, Examination, and Screening and 5. Further Investigations and Repeat Testing) Review previous LBTs (if available) and assess trends, e.g. mild

dinical status, PMH and comorbidities, famil ist-to-height ratio<sup>118</sup>, and

### a single baseline ALT is all that is Indiscriminate testing of LBTs in response to nonspecific symptoms that are <u>not</u> suggestive of liver disease is likely to lead to unnecessary patient concern, further testing, and investigation required—if this is <3x ULN, commence the statin and repeat ALT only if clinically indicated (note: NICE<sup>IDI</sup> and NHS AAC<sup>IDI</sup> quidelines do recommend further Opportunistic testing of LBTs is not measurements of ALT/AST as part of early statin monitoring) recommended for asymptomatic people without risk factors for liver disease. o DMARD monitoring: Main Indications for Checking LBTs discussion with the specialist team and Nonspecific symptoms suggestive of liver withholding of therapy may be warranted if ALT and/or AST >100 U/l, or an unexplained reduction in albumin <30 g/l disease, e.g. fatigue, nausea, or loss of appetite Evidence of chronic liver disease, e.g. Family history of liver diseases, e.g. symptoms or signs of portal hypertension, cirrhosis, or liver failure (including ascites, peripheral oedema, hepatosplenomegaly, and haemochromatosis or Wilson's disease (both autosomal recessive disorders): this may warrant ore specific, relevant tests Suspected alcohol misuse and dependence-Conditions associated with an increased risk of developing liver disease—including coexisting autoimmune disease, e.g. RA and coeliac disease (increased risk of AIH), and IBD (around 10% risk to identify physical health complications, e.g. liver inflammation and injury (elevated ALT/AST)

and portal hypertension (platelet reduction), and to assess liver synthetic function (PT/INR); see 10. Alcohol-related Liver Disease Monitoring of potentially hepatotoxic drugs (see 9. Pharmacological Causes)—various drugs are associated with liver disease and may require LBT monitoring. Notably: Suspected acute or chronic viral hepatitis (e.g. HBV, HCV, HAV, CMV, EBV)-standard LBTs in addition to hepatitis serology

o statin monitoring—statins can cause a transient rise in liver aminotransferases but do not cause liver disease; they are likely to Suspected primary or secondary liver malignancy on examination, in addition to an urgent, direct-access USS be beneficial in MASLD (note: CVD is a more As part of screening for MASLD in the presence common cause of death than liver disease in MASLD—see the <u>Primary Care Hack on</u> <u>MASLD/MASH</u>) and are associated with of its cardiometabolic risk factors and/or features of the metabolic syndrome, and/or when hepat steatosis is found incidentally on USS (see the Primary Care Hack on MASLD/MASH). - ourrent monitoring of LBTs for statins is

> Tests to consider in a targeted liver screen include: TETs lipid profile · alpha-1 antitrypsin coeliac screer iron studies

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· FIB-4, if MASLD is suspected

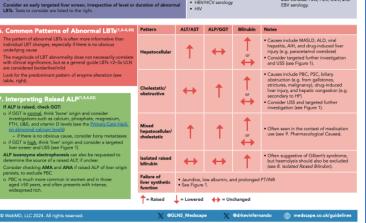
    serum or urine copper/
caeruloplasmin (if family history
of Wilson's disease, and/or

    autoimmune profile (anti-SMA,
AMA, anti-LKM antibodies, ANA)

                                                                    aged <45 years)

    if acute hepatitis is suspected,
also consider HAV, HEV, CMV, and

                                                                    EBV serology.
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3. Indications to Check LBTs[1,4,9,11-17]

spider naevi)

of comorbid PSC1

educed primary liver cancer

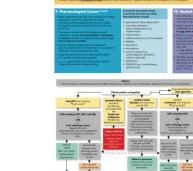
unnecessary and costly

HbA.

USS

immunoalabulins

HBV/HCV serology



solated Raised Bilirubin AA2122-21



Figure 1: BSG Algorithm

Response to Abnormal Live Blood Tests<sup>11</sup>



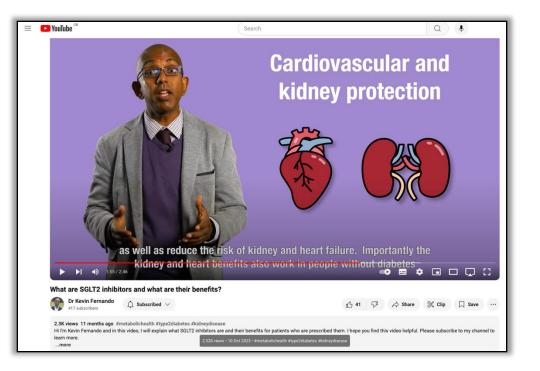


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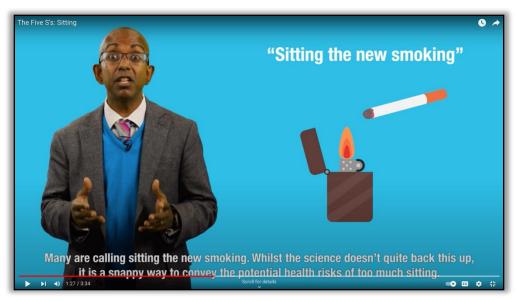
5. Further Investigations and Repeat Testing<sup>[1,4,9,20,21]</sup>

Continually repeating LBTs to see whether they normalise is usually an inefficient strategy in primary care, and is generally only appropriate if transient causes are suspected in the clinical context (e.g. simple viral liness or suspected

b the BALLETS study (2013)<sup>21</sup> found that 84% of abnormal LBTs in primary care remained abnormal on retesting 1 month later, and 75% were still abnormal a







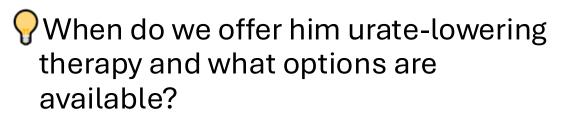


YouTube @DrKevinFernando

Henry	
== Age	58
History	Presents to duty surgery with a very sore & red left big toe. He's never had this before
РМН	Hypertension
== Examination	Clear evidence of podagra
BP	137/84
eGFR	>60 mL/min/1.73m <sup>2</sup>
Current Medication	Lisinopril 20mg od & Bendroflumethiazide 2.5mg od
Social history	Marketing. Non-smoker but enjoys alcohol regularly
22	

# **What do we offer Henry for his acute** attack of gout?

What lifestyle advice should we offer Henry?



What target serum uric acid should we aim for?

**P**Should we review his medications?

What are the implications for Henry's future CV risk?



# **Management of Gout**

NICE NG219 2022, BMJ 2022

- Gout is increasing in prevalence, incidence and severity yet remains underdiagnosed and under-managed by both HCPs and patients
- Commonest inflammatory arthritis
- A change in thinking...
  - From troublesome recurrent condition to chronic inflammatory arthritis
  - Ongoing crystal deposition leads to joint destruction and long-term pain & disability

# What do we offer Henry for his acute attack of gout?

- Clinical diagnosis exclude septic arthritis, pseudogout (wrist & knee)
  - Uric acid often falls during an acute attack so of no diagnostic value
  - Consider joint aspiration & microscopy if diagnosis uncertain
- Treat acute attacks early
  - Advise rest, ice pack & elevation
- Treatment choice should be guided by co-morbidities, current therapies, renal function & patient preference
  - 1st line: Full strength NSAID+/-PPI OR colchicine 500mcg bd-qds maximum dose 6mg (12 doses) (reduce dose if eGFR<50 or short course) OR oral steroids (prednisolone 30-35mg od for 3-5 days)
  - Consider intra-articular or intramuscular steroids if NSAIDs and colchicine are contraindicated, not tolerated or ineffective e.g. IM methylprednisolone 80-120mg

# What lifestyle advice should we offer Henry?

- All patients with gout should be given verbal & written information
- <u>https://versusarthritis.org/about-arthritis/conditions/gout/</u>
- UK Gout Society <u>www.ukgoutsociety.org/</u>
- Weight management
- DASH diet
- Reduce intake of high purine food e.g. red meat, game (venison), offal (liver & kidney) seafood, oily fish & shellfish, foods rich in yeast extract (e.g. Marmite)
- Vitamin C, skimmed milk & low-fat yoghurt can help. Cherries & cherry extract also helpful particularly alongside allopurinol
- Avoid excess alcohol especially beers and spirits
- Main adequate hydration



# When do we offer him ULT and what options are available?

- Offer ULT using a treat-to-target strategy to people with gout (1<sup>st</sup> or subsequent flare) who have:
  - Recurrent or troublesome flares
  - CKD stages G3-5
  - Diuretic therapy
  - Tophi
  - Chronic gouty arthritis
- ULT often life-long treatment

# When do we offer him ULT and what options are available?

- ULT is best delayed until acute inflammation & pain has settled (usually at least 2-4 weeks). If more frequent flares can be started during a flare
  - Check SUA after 4-6 weeks
  - Do not stop ULT during acute attacks
- 1<sup>st</sup> line: Allopurinol or feboxustat considering co-morbidities & preferences
  - Allopurinol 1<sup>st</sup> line in people with gout & CVD
  - Consider switching if SUA target not achieved or 1<sup>st</sup> line rx not tolerated
- Allopurinol: 100-900mg daily (lower if eGFR<60)
  - Increase 4-weekly by 100mg
- Feboxustat: 80-120mg daily
  - Safe in renal impairment
  - in patients with pre-existing major cardiovascular diseases, febuxostat therapy should be used cautiously, particularly in those with evidence of high urate crystal and tophi burden or those initiating urate-lowering therapy (MHRA 2023)
- Offer **gout prophylaxis** for up to 6 months to prevent acute gout
  - Colchicine 500mcg od-bd or low dose NSAID with PPI cover or low dose steroid if colchicine CI, not tolerated or ineffective

# What target serum uric acid should we aim for?

- Treat to a SUA target of <360µmol/l to prevent further crystal formation & to dissolve existing crystals
- Consider a lower target < 300µmol/l if:
  - Have tophi or chronic gouty arthritis
  - Continue to have ongoing frequent flares despite SUA < 360µmol/l
- Annual assessment of SUA

# Should we review his medications?

- Yes!
  - Switch diuretic to an alternative class of antihypertensive
  - Losartan and CCBs are better options as they have uricosuric properties
  - Also, fenofibrate and statins
  - Continue low dose aspirin

- SGLT2i's reduce SUA in people living with T2D
- Bempedoic acid can increase SUA and gout incidence

# What are the implications for Henry's future CV risk?

- Gout is strongly associated with an increased risk of a wide range of CVD
  - This association persists even after adjusting for traditional cardiovascular risk factors
  - Temporal association with flares: gout flares may signal a short-term increased risk for heart attack or stroke, especially in the 2m following an acute episode
- Monitor & manage CV risk factors aggressively in people with gout
- Assess CV risk e.g. using QRISK3-2018
  - Discuss life story & consider lifestyle choices
  - Review CV risk factors, BP, pulse etc.
  - Consider other bloods e.g. HbA1c, lipids, FIB-4

# Thank-you for listening. Any questions?

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