

Abnormal liver enzymes:

Your liver is situated in the upper right side of your abdomen. It helps to produce important blood components, stores vitamins, minerals and carbohydrate, regulates blood clotting and removes harmful substances from your body. Bile is a green-yellow fluid containing bile acids and waste products. This flows through ducts in your liver and eventually into the common bile duct and your intestine. Bile helps you to digest fats.

Alanine aminotransferase (ALT) is an enzyme found mainly inside the liver and helps us to detect inflammation of the liver.

Alkaline phosphatase is an enzyme that is produced by both the liver and bone. It can sometimes be raised if the bile ducts/tubes are blocked.

There are many causes of raised liver enzymes (ALT). Sometimes we see a short lived rise that returns to normal. This can occur after some viral infections or after exposure to substances that are eliminated by the liver.

One of the more common cause of elevated liver enzymes is drinking more alcohol than your liver can safely eliminate. Sometimes reducing alcohol intake can allow this enzyme to return to normal.

The second most common cause of elevated ALT is the laying down of fat in the liver. This reduces the amount of healthy liver tissue and can cause liver enlargement and sometimes tenderness. This is sometimes linked with alcohol intake, but in many people it is caused by being overweight or a tendency to lay down fat around your middle.

Raised liver enzymes can also be caused by infections (hepatitis), liver obstruction (from gallstones, tumours), some metabolic conditions such as iron or copper overload and other medication.

Investigations for raised liver enzymes:

If this is your first test showing raised liver enzymes then we will ask you to book an appointment with the treatment room to recheck your level after 4 weeks and then make sure you receive the results of these 2nd tests.

If your liver enzymes remain elevated then we may arrange for more extensive tests to establish why. These will include a blood tests and probably an ultrasound scan of your liver.

If your results show that you have non-alcoholic fatty liver disease you can read more about it on the NHS choices website at:

<http://www.nhs.uk/conditions/fatty-liver-disease/pages/introduction.aspx>