

# Metabolic Syndrome

Metabolic syndrome is a name for a group of risk factors that occur together and increase the risk for coronary artery disease, stroke, and type 2 diabetes. People with metabolic syndrome have an increased long-term risk for developing heart disease, type 2 diabetes, stroke, kidney disease, and poor blood supply to the legs.

Metabolic syndrome is present if you have three or more of the following signs:

- Blood pressure equal to or higher than 130/85 mmHg
- Fasting blood sugar (glucose) equal to or higher than 100 mg/dL
- Large waist circumference (length around the waist):
  - Men - 40 inches or more
  - Women - 35 inches or more
- Low HDL cholesterol:
  - Men - under 40 mg/dL
  - Women - under 50 mg/dL
- Triglycerides equal to or higher than 150 mg/dL

## Causes

Metabolic syndrome is becoming more and more common in the United States. Researchers are not sure whether the syndrome is due to one single cause, but all of the risks for the syndrome are related to obesity.

The two most important risk factors for metabolic syndrome are:

- Extra weight around the middle and upper parts of the body (central obesity). The body may be described as "apple-shaped."
- Insulin resistance. The body uses insulin less effectively than normal. Insulin is needed to help control the amount of sugar in the body. As a result, blood sugar and fat levels rise.

Other risk factors include:

- Aging
- Genes that make you more likely to develop this condition
- Hormone changes
- Lack of exercise

People who have metabolic syndrome often have other problems that can either cause the condition or make it worse:

- Excess blood clotting
- Increased levels of blood substances that are a sign of inflammation throughout the body

## Treatment

The goal of treatment is to reduce your risk of heart disease and diabetes.

Your doctor will recommend lifestyle changes or medicines to help reduce your blood pressure, LDL cholesterol, and blood sugar.

- Lose weight. The goal is to lose between 7% and 10% of your current weight. You will probably need to eat 500 - 1,000 fewer calories per day.
- Get 30 minutes of moderate intensity exercise, such as walking, 5 - 7 days per week.
- Lower your cholesterol using weight loss, exercise, and cholesterol lowering medicines, if needed.
- Lower your blood pressure using weight loss, exercise, and medicine, if needed.
- People who smoke should quit

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