

Care Gram

Metabolic Syndrome

What Is Metabolic Syndrome?

Metabolic syndrome is a group of traits and risk factors that, if not treated, can lead to heart disease, type 2 diabetes, stroke, fatty liver disease, and several cancers. Insulin resistance, a condition in which the body does not use insulin as it should, is one of the traits of metabolic syndrome. This syndrome also involves abnormal fat tissue deposits in the liver and around vital organs. Metabolic syndrome also causes overall chronic, systemic inflammation and increases the chances of developing serious cardiovascular conditions.

5 risk factors of metabolic syndrome include:

- Extra body fat in and around the waist and middle of your body – an “apple-shaped body”
- High triglycerides
- Low HDL cholesterol (good cholesterol)
- High blood pressure
- High fasting blood sugar

Lifestyle factors, such as unhealthy diet choices and lack of exercise, increase your risk of metabolic syndrome.

How Do I Know I Have Metabolic Syndrome?

You must have a least 3 of the 5 risk factors listed below to be diagnosed with metabolic syndrome.

- Waistline (measured across the belly)
 - Men – greater than 40 inches
 - Women – greater than 35 inches
- Fasting blood triglycerides greater than or equal to 150mg/dL or taking medicine for high triglycerides
- Low Blood HDL (good cholesterol)
 - Men – less than 40mg/dL
 - Women – less than 50mg/dL
- High blood pressure greater than 130/80mm/Hg or taking medicine for high blood pressure (American Heart Association guidelines)
- Fasting blood sugar – 100-125mg/dL (fasting blood sugar above 125 would diagnose diabetes) or taking medicine for blood sugar

How Is Metabolic Syndrome Treated?

You can manage most of the 5 risk factors of metabolic syndrome through lifestyle changes and improvement to your overall heart health.



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Enjoy a Healthy Diet

- Increase your intake of fruits, berries, and brightly colored and green leafy vegetables – make half your plate fruit and vegetables
- Choose more whole grain foods and intact grains, such as brown or wild rice, wheat berries, quinoa, teff, and barley for your side dishes. Make at least half of your grains whole grains. Choose bread that list “whole grains” as the first ingredient and contains at least 3 grams of fiber per serving. Use whole grain pasta.
- Choose healthier protein sources, such as skinless poultry, non-fried fish and seafood, lean meats, and plant-based protein (beans, nuts, seeds, and tofu).
- Choose healthier unsaturated fats that are liquid at room temperature, such as olive, avocado, and canola oil.
- Limit alcohol to 1 serving or less a day for women and 2 servings or less a day for men.
- Limit processed and refined grains.
- Limit foods high in added sugars, sugar-sweetened beverages, lattes, sweetened cereals, candies, sugar, honey, corn syrup, and high fructose corn syrup. Limit added sugar to 25 grams or less for women and children daily and 35 grams or less a day for men.
- Limit salt, foods high in sodium, and processed and cured meats.
- Limit solid saturated fats, such as butter, lard, animal fats, and tropical fats (coconut and palm oil).
- Limit oils high in omega-6, such as corn, soybean, and sunflower, which may affect inflammation.
- Limit fried foods and red meats.

Increase Your Activity

- Strive to get 150 minutes a week of moderate-intensity aerobic activity.
- Exercise 30 minutes or more 5 days a week – choose activities that will increase your heart rate, such as briskly walking, water aerobics, or stair walking.
- Include strength-building exercises at least 2 times a week to build muscle. Muscles burn calories, help you lose weight, and supports your skeletal system.
- Always check with your primary care provider before starting any new exercise plan.

Lose Weight

Losing 5 to 10 percent of your body weight can help prevent metabolic syndrome and improve many risk factors.

Quit the Use of Nicotine Products

Nicotine may increase “bad” LDL cholesterol and increase insulin resistance. For help, contact a tobacco cessation counselor at (220) 564-7848 (QUIT).

Follow-up

- If you would like know more about metabolic syndrome, contact your doctor.
- A dietitian can help you develop a weight loss plan and healthy eating habits. Check with your health insurance provider to see if your plan covers dietitian care, and ask your doctor to refer you to a dietitian.