

METABOLIC SYNDROME

■ WHAT IS METABOLIC SYNDROME?

Metabolic Syndrome is a cluster of abnormalities affecting how the body processes food for energy. The major player for metabolic syndrome is insulin resistance. Insulin is a hormone which helps keep blood sugar levels in the normal ranges. Insulin resistance occurs when insulin levels begin to rise and cells in the body lose the ability to transport blood sugar out of the blood and into the cells. Insulin resistance at the cellular level causes a rise in blood sugar.



■ HOW IS METABOLIC SYNDROME DIAGNOSED?

While any one of the following risks can increase health concerns, when multiple risks occur together, the impact on your health is increased. For metabolic syndrome to be diagnosed, three of the five following risks must be present:

- Excess abdominal fat: 40 or more inches in men and 35 or more inches in women
- Elevated triglyceride levels of over 150 mg/dL
- Reduced HDL or good cholesterol levels: less than 40 mg/dL for men and less than 50 mg/dL for women
- Elevated blood pressure (130/85)
- Fasting blood sugar over 100 mg/dL or a diagnosis of Type 2 diabetes

■ HOW MANY AMERICAN ADULTS ARE AFFECTED?

Metabolic syndrome affects 47 million adults in the United States and nearly three times as many people have metabolic syndrome as have diabetes. It is a major risk factor for coronary heart disease, peripheral vascular disease, stroke and diabetes, and has been linked to numerous other health concerns including dementia and cancers.

■ WHO IS AT RISK FOR METABOLIC SYNDROME?

You may be at risk for metabolic syndrome if you have some or all of the following risk factors:

- If you have a family history of type 2 diabetes
- If you have had gestational diabetes, pregnancy induced diabetes, or delivered a baby that weighed nine pounds or more
- If you are overweight
- If you have been diagnosed with Polycystic Ovarian Disease
- If you exercise less than 30 minutes a day, less than three times a week

■ WHAT CAN BE DONE TO REDUCE THE EFFECTS OF METABOLIC SYNDROME?

Diet - See other HeartFacts topics on nutrition and healthy eating

Physical Activity - Accumulate 30 to 60 minutes of moderate intensity cardiovascular activity most days of the week. Purchasing a pedometer can be helpful to that you can keep track of the daily steps you take. The American Heart Association recommends a goal of 10,000 steps a day. Strength training is also an important feature in your weekly exercise plan. Strength training builds stronger muscles and connective tissue as well as increases the amount of calories you burn because of specific exercises for muscle groups performed.