

# HEALTH AT A GLANCE

## Are You at Risk for Metabolic Syndrome?

A person with metabolic syndrome is twice as likely to develop heart disease and five times more likely to develop diabetes than someone who does not have it. Find out more about this condition and what you can do to prevent or reverse it.

### Metabolic Syndrome Defined

Metabolic syndrome is the name for a group of risk factors that occur together and increase the risk for health problems, such as heart disease, stroke and diabetes. There are five risk factors for this condition:

- **Abdominal Obesity:** A waist circumference measuring 40 inches or higher for men, or 35 inches or more for women.
- **High Triglycerides:** A level of 150 mg/dL or higher.
- **Low HDL:** Values less than 40 mg/dL for men or under 50 mg/dL for women.
- **Elevated Blood Pressure:** A measurement of 130/85 mmHg or higher; only one of these numbers needs to be elevated in order for it to be counted as a risk factor (i.e., a blood pressure of 125/87 is considered a risk factor).
- **High Glucose:** A fasting blood glucose level of 100 mg/dL or higher.

Having three or more of these risks qualifies a person for having metabolic syndrome, and the more risk factors a person has, the greater their risk.

### Reduce Your Risk/Prevent/Treat/Reverse

According to the American Heart Association about 20-25% of Americans have metabolic syndrome. Thankfully, this condition can be treated and even reversed with these key lifestyle changes:

- **Lose Weight:** A weight loss of just 5 to 10% of your current body weight (i.e., 10-20 lb. for a 200 lb. person) can improve all of the metabolic risk factors listed above. To trim down, try incorporating more activity into your daily routine, reducing your portion sizes, cutting back on sugar-sweetened beverages and snacks, limiting fast food and drinking more water.
- **Increase Physical Activity:** When exercising, be sure to choose activities that you enjoy and make it fun! Swim, garden, bike, try exercise classes or mix it up! The goal is to work up to 150 minutes of moderate intense activity (i.e., brisk walking, mowing the lawn) or 75 minutes of vigorous activity (jogging, basketball); you can also do a combination of the two. Exercise bouts as short as 10 minutes can even be counted towards your weekly quota. In addition, be sure to include at least two strength training session each week, targeting all of the major muscle groups.
- **Commit to a Healthy Eating Plan:** Incorporate more fruits, vegetables, lean meats, whole grains and heart healthy fats, such as canola or olive oil, flaxseed, avocados and nuts, into your eating plan. Try to cut back on processed foods that are high in fat, sodium and sugar, such as chips, desserts and fried foods.
- **Quit Tobacco:** If you smoke or use tobacco, talk with your doctor about programs or products that can help you quit.

### KEY WEBSITES

Mayo Clinic: [www.mayoclinic.org](http://www.mayoclinic.org)

National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute: [www.nhlbi.nih.gov](http://www.nhlbi.nih.gov)

American Heart Association: [www.heart.org](http://www.heart.org)

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