

METABOLIC SYNDROME

Metabolic syndrome is a group of health problems that together double the risk of heart attack and stroke, and increase the risk of diabetes by five times. According to the American Heart Association one out of every six Americans has it. The syndrome runs in families, and is more common in African-Americans, Hispanics, Asians, and Native Americans.

The risks of developing metabolic syndrome increase with age.

Frequently Asked Questions

1. *What are the five signs of metabolic syndrome?*

Most of the disorders associated with metabolic syndrome have no symptoms.

- A large waist size of more than 40 inches in men, and 35 inches in women.
- Blood pressure measurements of Systolic more than 130 mm Hg and Diastolic of more than 85 mm Hg in both men and women.
- Cholesterol: Low good cholesterol [HDL] high-density lipoprotein cholesterol level of below 40 mg/dL in men and below 50 mg/dL in women, or taking cholesterol medication.
- Cholesterol: High triglycerides level of over 150 mg/dL in both men or women, or taking cholesterol medication.
- Blood Sugar: High fasting glucose level of over 110 mg/dL in both men and women or taking diabetes medication.

2. *How is metabolic syndrome typically diagnosed?*

Having just one symptom doesn't mean metabolic syndrome is present. However, any of these conditions increase the risk of serious disease. Having more than one of these might increase the risk even more. To be diagnosed with metabolic syndrome at least three of the risk factors would be present.

3. *Can metabolic syndrome be reversed?*

The good news is that metabolic syndrome can be controlled largely with changes to life style choices.

- Obesity – especially abdominal obesity. Metabolic syndrome is becoming more common because of rising obesity rates. In addition, having extra belly fat – as opposed to elsewhere in the body – seem to increase the risk.
- Smoking
- Unhealthy lifestyle. Eating a diet in unhealthy processed foods and not getting enough physical activity can play a role.
- Insulin resistance. Insulin is a hormone that helps the body use glucose. In people with insulin resistance the insulin doesn't work as well, so the body keeps making more of it to cope with with the rising level of glucose. Eventually, this can lead to diabetes. Insulin resistance is closely connected to having excess weight in the belly.
- Inflammation is the key biologic mechanism that leads to conditions causing metabolic syndrome. There is a correlation between gum disease and the resulting inflammation that contributes to the disorder. In addition to the destruction of gum and bone in the mouth, the inflamed periodontal tissues create inflammatory factors that are released into the blood stream.