

Metabolic Syndrome (and how to avoid it)

Metabolic syndrome is also known as Insulin Resistance or syndrome X. It is actually a clustering of risk factors. Patients with metabolic syndrome are at an increased risk for developing diabetes and cardiovascular disease. This syndrome is most prevalent in overweight or obese people who live a sedentary lifestyle. Diets high in calories and saturated fat contribute to the risk factors associated with this syndrome. The key components of the syndrome are abdominal obesity, abnormal lipids (fats), high blood pressure and glucose intolerance.

To diagnose Metabolic syndrome doctors look for three or more of the following factors

- Abdominal girth greater than 35 inches in women and greater than 40 inches in men
- Blood pressure of 130/85 or higher
- Fasting blood sugar of 100 or higher
- Fasting triglycerides of over 150
- HDL cholesterol of less than 50 in women and 40 in men

It is estimated that 47 million adults have metabolic syndrome. An estimated one million adolescents have this syndrome.

Metabolic syndrome means a higher incidence of heart disease and type 2 diabetes.

To treat this syndrome people need to get regular exercise, institute dietary changes and achieve weight loss.

There are five goals to management of metabolic syndrome:

- Achieve and maintain weight loss and reduce abdominal obesity(strive for one to two pounds a week of weight loss)
- Maintain regular exercise (30-60 minutes five days a week)
- Achieve and maintain normal lipid levels
- Achieve and maintain normal blood pressure
- Achieve and maintain normal fasting blood glucose levels (decrease carbohydrates, increase fruits and vegetables).

Know your numbers/consult with your doctor

It is important that your doctor assess the risk factors for metabolic syndrome. The increase in obesity in adolescents means many of our children will be at risk for metabolic syndrome. It is important to know your Body Mass Index and that of each family member.

It is important to have blood work which will tell you if you are at risk for metabolic syndrome.

It is awesome to monitor your “numbers” and to see them improve with diet and exercise.

The good news is metabolic syndrome can be reversed. The life you save may be your own or that of a loved one.