



What is metabolic syndrome?

Metabolic syndrome is a cluster of metabolic risk factors. When a patient presents with these risk factors together, the chances for future cardiovascular problems are greater than any one factor presenting alone.

For example, high blood pressure alone is a serious condition, but when a patient has high blood pressure along with high fasting glucose levels and abdominal obesity, this patient may be diagnosed with metabolic syndrome. There is a greater chance this patient will have cardiovascular problems because of the combination of risk factors.

Metabolic syndrome is a serious health condition that affects about 34 percent of adults and places them at higher risk of cardiovascular disease, diabetes, stroke and diseases related to fatty buildups in artery walls. The underlying causes of metabolic syndrome include overweight and obesity, physical inactivity and genetic factors.

How is metabolic syndrome diagnosed?

Metabolic syndrome occurs when a person has three or more of the following measurements:

- Abdominal obesity (Waist circumference of 40 inches or above in men, and 35 inches or above in women)
- Triglyceride level of 150 milligrams per deciliter of blood (mg/dL) or greater
- HDL cholesterol of less than 40 mg/dL in men or less than 50 mg/dL in women
- Systolic blood pressure (top number) of 130 millimeters of mercury (mm Hg) or greater, or diastolic blood pressure (bottom number) of 85 mm Hg or greater
- Fasting glucose of 100 mg/dL or greater

Prevention and Treatment

Treating metabolic syndrome requires addressing several risk factors together. [My Life Check](#) provides a scoring tool and checklist with seven key heart-healthy targets for improving the quality and length of your life. Life's Simple 7™ will improve your overall cardiovascular health and greatly improve the individual risk factors that make up metabolic syndrome. Here's what you can do starting today:

- [Eat better](#). Adopt a diet rich in whole grains, fruits, vegetables, lean meats and fish, and low-fat or fat-free dairy products and avoid processed food, which often contains partially hydrogenated vegetable oils, and is high in salt and added sugar.

- **Get active.** Incorporate at least 150 minutes of moderately vigorous physical activity into your weekly routine. Walking is the easiest place to start, but you may want to experiment to find something else you like to do that gets your heart rate up. If needed, break your exercise up into several short, 10-minute sessions throughout the day to reach your goal.
- **Lose weight.** Reduce your risk for heart disease by successfully losing weight and keeping it off. Learn your recommended calorie intake, the amount of food calories you're consuming, and the energy calories you're burning off with different levels of physical activity. Balance healthy eating with a healthy level of exercise to reach your goals.
- **Take medications,** if prescribed. When changes in lifestyle alone do not control the risk factors related to metabolic syndrome, your health practitioner may prescribe medications to control blood pressure, cholesterol, and other symptoms. Careful following your practitioner's instructions can help prevent many of the long term effects of metabolic syndrome. Every step counts and your hard work and attention to these areas will make a difference in your health!