

Metabolic Syndrome

Metabolic syndrome is a serious health condition that affects about 34 percent of adults, putting them at higher risk of diabetes, stroke, cardiovascular disease and diseases related to the fatty buildup in artery walls.

WHAT IS IT?

Metabolic syndrome is a cluster of metabolic risk factors. Patients who present with these risk factors together have a greater chance for future cardiovascular problems than any one factor presenting alone. For example, high blood pressure alone is a serious condition, but combined with high fasting glucose levels and abdominal obesity, it puts you at higher risk for cardiovascular problems. A patient with these factors could be diagnosed with metabolic syndrome. Due to the combination of factors, the greater the risk this patient will have cardiovascular problems.

Being overweight or obese, physical inactivity and genetic factors can all be included as underlying causes of metabolic syndrome.

People with metabolic syndrome are at an increased risk for the following:

- Coronary heart disease and heart attack
- Atherosclerosis, peripheral vascular disease
- Stroke
- Type 2 diabetes

WHY DOES IT OCCUR?

While some people may be genetically prone to developing insulin resistance or metabolic syndrome, there are other risk factors, including:

- Sex (men are more likely to develop metabolic syndrome than women)
- Excess body fat
- Low levels of physical activity
- A diet high in carbohydrates (more than 60 percent of daily calorie intake from carbs)

HOW IS IT DIAGNOSED?

Metabolic syndrome may occur in a person with three or more of the following measurements:

- Abdominal obesity (waist circumference of more than 40 inches in men; 35 inches or more in women)
- Triglyceride level of 150 milligrams per deciliter of blood (mg/dL) or greater
- Fasting glucose of 100 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

HOW TO REDUCE YOUR RISKS

Metabolic syndrome is a serious condition; however, you can reduce your risks significantly by:

- Increasing your physical activity
- Choosing a heart-healthy diet rich in whole grains, fruits, vegetables and fish
- Losing weight
- Working with your primary care physician to help monitor and manage your glucose, cholesterol and blood pressure

About Metabolic Syndrome. (2014, October 24). Retrieved April 26, 2016, from www.heart.org/HEARTORG