

Should You Be Worried About Your Waist Line

Too much of fat any type isn't healthy, but some forms are worse than others. The flab you can pinch between your fingers is known as subcutaneous fat, which lies just beneath the skin. A more worrisome type of fat lies deep within the abdominal cavity, padding the space between your organs. This is known as visceral fat and it raises your risk of cardiovascular disease.

There is evidence suggesting that your waist circumference is a better predictor of heart disease than your body mass index. BMI is an indirect estimate of body fat based on your height and weight, it doesn't distinguish between different types of fat. People can have healthy BMI, but still have a large belly and visceral fat.

Another measurement, the waist to hip ratio correlates with visceral fat. But there is no need to do that extra hip measurement because waist circumference alone is strongly linked to visceral fat.

HOW TO MEASURE WAIST CIRCUMFERENCE: Wrap a measuring tape around your bare abdomen just above the upper border of your hip bone which you can easily feel on both sides. Usually the tape measures will cross your belly button, but not for everyone. Make sure the tape measure isn't twisted and that it stays taut, but not tight enough to compress the area. Don't suck in your gut or hold your breath.

Check the number right after you exhale. For Indian women, the circumference should be less than 80cm and for Indian men it should be less than 90 cm. Ideally, your waist circumference should be no greater than 1/2 your height.

WHY IS VISCERAL FAT DANGEROUS Visceral fat is also a marker for ectopic fat, which refers to fat that accumulates inside organs such as liver, heart, and pancreas and muscles. This is closely associated with metabolic problems, specially, type two diabetes.

In addition, visceral fat, secretes hormones, and other inflammatory factors, collectively called Adipokines or cytokines which trigger a buildup of fatty Plaques inside arteries. Your genes, ethnic background, and gender, all influence how likely you are to accumulate visceral fat . South Asia people including Indians are at high risk.

WHAT CAN YOU DO: 1.

Get regular exercise- situps or other abdominal exercises won't shrink your belly fat. Instead, you need to burn calories to lose fat and build up muscles through a combination of aerobic and strength training exercise. At least 30 to 40 minutes daily of moderate intensity, exercise, and do strength based exercise for at least two days a week . 2.

Reduced carbohydrate diet-avoid foods and drinks with added sugars and other simple carbohydrates that spike blood sugar and increase your body to store fat. This include foods made with white flour such as pasta, pizza, pretzels, bread, and bagels, and also starchy foods such as white potatoes, white rice, and corn 3.

Time restricted eating-studies suggest that this strategy may lower blood sugar levels and reduce visceral fat. For example, you may eat only between 9 AM and 5 PM and fast during the other 16 hours .This not only limits calorie intake but also may start the body fat burning process.

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