

METABOLIC SYNDROME

(Insulin Resistance Syndrome; Syndrome X)



BASIC INFORMATION

DESCRIPTION

Metabolic syndrome is not just a specific disorder. Rather it is a group (or cluster) of five health risks. Having any three of these five health risks would mean that you have the syndrome. A person with metabolic syndrome is more likely to have heart disease, stroke, and diabetes in the future. The health risks include:

- Abdominal obesity.
- Elevated fasting blood triglycerides (a type of fat).
- Low levels of HDL, or “good” cholesterol.
- High fasting blood sugar (glucose) or high insulin.
- High blood pressure.

FREQUENT SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS

Usually, there are no physical symptoms.

CAUSES

The exact cause of the syndrome is not known. It may be due to a combination of genetic makeup (that you inherit from your parents) and lifestyle choices of diet and physical activity.

RISK INCREASES WITH

Studies are ongoing to see who may be at risk for metabolic syndrome. It does occur more often in Hispanics than in whites or African Americans.

PREVENTIVE MEASURES

- Eat a healthy diet.
- Exercise routinely.
- Don't use tobacco in any form.
- Maintain a healthy body weight.

EXPECTED OUTCOMES

Lifestyle changes involving your diet, weight loss, exercise, and drugs (if needed) can usually reverse the risk factors.

POSSIBLE COMPLICATIONS

If not treated, the syndrome often leads to early heart disease, stroke, and other vascular (blood vessel) problems, as well as diabetes. The more risk factors you have, the more likely you are to have complications.



DIAGNOSIS & TREATMENT

GENERAL MEASURES

• Your health care provider will order the medical tests and go over the results with you. Metabolic syndrome is diagnosed if you have three or more of the following:

1. Waistline of 40 inches or more for men and 35 inches or more for women (measured across the belly).
2. Blood pressure of 130/85 mm Hg or higher.
3. Triglyceride level above 150 mg/dL.
4. Fasting blood glucose (sugar) level greater than 100 mg/dL.
5. HDL, the “good” cholesterol, less than 40 mg/dL (men) or under 50 mg/dL (women).

• You and your health care provider can decide on an action plan to reduce your risks of heart disease and stroke. This may include changes in diet, getting more exercise, weight loss, stopping smoking, and perhaps drug therapy.

• Diet and life-style changes do not mean you have to give up all the good things you enjoy. Even moderate changes can have a big impact on your risk factors.

• To learn more: American Heart Association, 7272 Greenville Ave., Dallas, TX 75231; (800) 242-8721; website: www.americanheart.org.

MEDICATIONS

• Drugs may be prescribed to lower cholesterol and lower high blood pressure.

• Weight loss drugs may be prescribed for a short time.

ACTIVITY

Increase physical activity. Try to get at least 30 minutes of aerobic exercise (such as walking) every day.

DIET

• Limit foods that contain saturated fats and high amounts of cholesterol. Read food labels carefully.

• Eat plenty of fruits/vegetables and high-fiber foods.

• Begin a weight-reduction diet if you are overweight.



NOTIFY OUR OFFICE IF

• You or a family member wants more information about the metabolic syndrome.

• You need help with diet and exercise planning.

Special notes:

More notes on the back of this page