

August Nutrition News: Metabolic Syndrome

What is Metabolic Syndrome?

Metabolic syndrome is a group of five conditions that can lead to heart disease, diabetes, stroke and other health problems. Metabolic syndrome is diagnosed when someone has three or more of the following risk factors:

- *High blood glucose (sugar)*
- *Low levels of HDL (“good”) cholesterol in the blood*
- *High levels of triglycerides in the blood*
- *Large waist circumference or “apple-shaped” body*
- *High blood pressure*

Although each of these is a risk factor for cardiovascular disease, when a person has three or more and is diagnosed with metabolic syndrome, the chance of developing a serious cardiovascular condition increases. For example, high blood pressure is an important risk factor for cardiovascular disease, but when combined with high fasting blood sugar levels and abdominal obesity (large waistline), the chance for developing cardiovascular disease is intensified.

Metabolic syndrome is a serious health condition that puts people at higher risk of heart disease, diabetes, stroke and diseases related to fatty buildups in artery walls (atherosclerosis). Underlying causes of metabolic syndrome include overweight and obesity, insulin resistance, physical inactivity, genetic factors and increasing age.

Although metabolic syndrome is a serious condition, you can reduce your risks significantly by losing weight; increasing your physical activity; eating a heart-healthy diet that is rich in whole grains, fruits, vegetables and fish; and working with your health care team to monitor and manage your blood glucose, blood cholesterol and blood pressure.

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