

What is Metabolic Syndrome?

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Metabolic Syndrome is also known as insulin resistance syndrome and syndrome X. If you search for “Metabolic Syndrome” on the internet you will find over 12 million results. Metabolic Syndrome is not front-page news, but many experts say it should be. So, what is Metabolic Syndrome?

The experts say about one in five American adults suffers from metabolic syndrome, a preventable and reversible disorder that puts you at significant risk for medical problems, this condition can damage your body for years without giving you a clue that you have a problem.

Metabolic Syndrome is a condition characterized by a cluster of risk factors that are linked to your body's metabolism (chemical processes in your body). Together, these conditions dramatically boost your chance for developing life-threatening illnesses such as: heart disease, diabetes, liver and kidney disease, and possibly cancer. Some people are genetically disposed to the syndrome; others develop it from being overweight and not exercising enough. Metabolic Syndrome is capable of affecting anyone at any age. The cluster of risk factors associated with Metabolic Syndrome are:

- Elevated waist circumference
- Elevated triglycerides
- Reduced HDL (“good cholesterol”)
- Elevated blood pressure
- Elevated fasting glucose

Experts believe if you have one component of metabolic syndrome, you are at increased risk for having one or more of the others. The more components you have, the greater your risk of developing major medical problems. Studies have shown that people who have metabolic syndrome are twice as likely to develop cardiovascular problems and four times as likely to develop type 2 diabetes as people who don't have metabolic syndrome.

Just because you haven't heard of metabolic syndrome doesn't mean it is not important. It is the “perfect storm” of risk factors. Most people who have metabolic syndrome are completely unaware. If diagnosed early, metabolic syndrome can be treated and reversed...even prevented. It is never too late, exercise and drop the excess weight and you too can successfully reduce and in some cases reverse the affects of metabolic syndrome.

Many experts believe metabolic syndrome is a ticking time bomb, and that there will be an explosion of metabolic syndrome in the next 10-15 years. These health risks and costs associated should spur employers to develop programs to encourage employees to promote good health.

So why isn't metabolic syndrome making front-page news? Well...there is no well-accepted criteria for diagnosing metabolic syndrome. However, the National Cholesterol Education Program (NCEP), the American Heart Association and the National Heart, Lung, and Blood

Institute agree on the existence of metabolic syndrome and the cluster of risk factors, and are making progress on spreading the word about metabolic syndrome. Another reason is because the experts believe looking at metabolic syndrome as a “cluster” of risks factors is still not widely used; we still view medical risks in silos.

Tri-State Health Care Coalition Annual Conference

Our annual conference is Wednesday, September 27. We have some speakers lined up and are working on getting others. John Maill and Dan Garrett, American Pharmacists Association, will give a presentation on the Asheville project, a patient self management program where pharmacists are care coordinators for individuals with chronic conditions such as Cardiovascular disease and Diabetes. We are also looking for a speaker to discuss Metabolic Syndrome – pre-diabetes condition.