

Metabolic syndrome and your risk for diabetes often go together. Your Diabetes Education Centre or iConnect Health Centre in Fraser Health and the Canadian Diabetes Association can provide you with more information to help you manage metabolic syndrome. Below is information provided by the Canadian Diabetes Association about metabolic syndrome.

What is metabolic syndrome?

Metabolic syndrome is a term used to describe a group of conditions that puts people at higher risk of developing type 2 diabetes, heart disease and other heart-related problems (according to the United States Expert Panel on Detection, Evaluation, and Treatment of High Blood Cholesterol in Adults).

If you have **3 or more** of the following conditions, you are considered to have metabolic syndrome:

- High fasting blood glucose levels (5.6 mmol/L or higher)
- High blood pressure (130/85 mm Hg or higher)
- High level of triglycerides, a type of fat in your blood (1.7 mmol/L or higher)
- Low levels of HDL, the “good” blood cholesterol (lower than 1.0 mmol/L in men or 1.3 mmol/L in women)
- Abdominal obesity or too much fat around your waist [a waist circumference of greater than 102 cm (40 inches) in men and greater than 88 cm (35 inches) in women]

The more of these conditions you have, the higher your risks of developing type 2 diabetes and heart disease.

There is still some debate about what causes metabolic syndrome. Some researchers believe the cause may be related to insulin resistance (when the body does not effectively use insulin to turn sugar from food into energy for the body). Genetics, older age and lifestyle - including a high-fat diet and inactivity - also appear to play a role.

Reduce Your Risks

The good news is that even modest improvements in eating habits and physical activity have been shown to improve the conditions associated with metabolic syndrome and reduce poor health outcomes. Results from the Diabetes Prevention Program study showed that reducing body weight by just 5% to 7% and increasing physical activity to 150 minutes per week could reduce the risk of developing type 2 diabetes in obese people at risk of the disease.

Take steps to improve your lifestyle and help reduce your risks of metabolic syndrome, heart disease and type 2 diabetes:

- Follow a healthy eating plan.
- Exercise regularly.
- Maintain a healthy weight.
- Have your blood glucose, blood pressure and cholesterol levels tested regularly.

If you already have any of the above conditions, talk to your doctor about how lifestyle changes and possibly medication can lower your risks.

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