

# ABDOMINAL (STOMACH) BODY FAT, WEIGHT GAIN, INSULIN RESISTANCE, HIGH BLOOD PRESSURE, & CANCER - AN AMERICAN EPIDEMIC

## A Clinical Nutritionists Perspective

By: Christopher Fuzy M. S., R.D, L.D/N.

Masters Degree in Clinical Nutrition/ Sports Nutrition

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It's A Lifestyle.... Not a Diet!!! ®

What raises blood pressure, salt (sodium) or sugar? The answer is **both**. HOWEVER, studies show that only approximately 30% of the population is salt sensitive, which means that salt increases their blood pressure. *Salt sensitive - high blood pressure is most prevalent with black people over the age of 50 years old.*

## ABDOMINAL FAT, PRE- DIABETES AND METABOLIC SYNDROME

What happens when your waist circumference is over 35 inches (women) or 40 inches (men), your blood sugar is slightly elevated, your HDL cholesterol (your good cholesterol) is slightly low, and your blood pressure edges up (just 10 points)? If one of your risk factors includes a waist measurement (measure around your belly button, not your hip) then this is another significant risk factor for diabetes, heart disease and other diseases Americans are plagued with. When at least 3 of these problems occur together, you have a new disease called “**metabolic syndrome or syndrome X**”. A recent national survey found that more than one in five Americans have it, putting them at an increased risk for diabetes, heart disease, stroke, cancer and insulin resistance. Insulin resistance means that it may be difficult for the insulin to take the blood sugar into the muscle cells where the sugar needs to be in order to burn fuel. Instead blood sugar is slightly elevated and fat storage becomes a problem, rather than fat oxidation (breakdown).

*Stomach fat has a very active metabolism unlike most other fat in the body. The stomach fat cells are like mini nuclear power plants that produce a huge amount of bad hormone like toxins (cytokines) that cause these metabolic problems and pre-mature aging and diseases.*

The theory is that it is the excess insulin combined with an over production of these hormone like toxins (cytokines) that is contributing to the rise in blood pressure. Stress also raises another hormone that raises blood pressure and insulin. A sedentary lifestyle does not help matters.

Insulin is the hormone in the body that is responsible for transporting sugar from the blood stream into the cells for energy. Sugar now has a difficult time entering into the cells that need it and results in a small increase in blood sugar and metabolic syndrome, cardiovascular disease, and maybe increased risk for cancer. This results in high blood sugar and high insulin levels, as the body keeps trying to bring the rising blood sugar under control by pumping out ever-increasing amounts of insulin. **Most doctors may not address just slight elevations in blood sugar.**

Most people that have **Syndrome X** are unaware that they have it. Recognition of this disorder is so new, that many doctors may fail to realize and treat it. When certain small changes are made in lifestyle and diet that the impact on disease management and prevention is substantial.

On a separate but related health issue the American Diabetes Association announces a new diagnosis and disease – **PRE – DIABETES**. According to the research, unmanaged PRE-DIABETES can become diabetes. **The statistics suggest that 95 % of Diabetes cases in the U.S. are Type 2 Diabetes or was once known as “adult onset diabetes. We use to think that the majority of diabetes cases were due to family history or genetics, this is not the case.**

According to the director for the, U.S. Centers for Disease Control, Frank Vinicor, “If we don’t identify pre- diabetes and stop the development of Type 2 diabetes, the health – care system is going to be completely over-whelmed”.

The disease /syndrome usually occurs with inactive people who become over-weight (especially in the abdominal area), eat incorrectly and then develop insulin resistance.

Many clients ask, “Why am I always tired or hungry?” As soon as 3:00 P.M. comes around we break out the bag of snacks in the office. “After dinner, my cravings are uncontrollable and around 9:00 P.M I eat the house down”.

### **TRIPLE HEALTH THREAT**

Excessive insulin in the blood can promote weight gain, elevate blood pressure, increase triglycerides, and cause a slight drop in HDL’s – the good cholesterol. The most important aspect of this syndrome is it is the pre-cursor to diabetes, cardiovascular disease, cancer and stroke.

### **WEIGHT LOSS AND EXERCISE ARE THE KEY**

The single most effective way to fight insulin resistance is to lose weight. Losing just a few pounds has been shown to restore the body’s natural ability to recognize insulin. Gerald Reaven, M.D., professor of medicine emeritus at Stanford University who coined the phrase, “Syndrome X”, suggests a diet slightly lower in carbohydrates works best approximately 45% of total calories. Definitely, not a very low fat diet! This generally adds to the confusion with most clients, the first thing they think to do to lower the triglycerides is to follow a very low fat diet, which in turn always makes you hungry. **A low fat diet is not always needed for lipid control blood glucose management and weight loss.** Physical activity will definitely help insulin resistance and metabolic syndrome.

**From a nutrition and disease standpoint, it is paramount to have the correct balance between carbohydrates, fats and, proteins. This balance** is important as it relates to food cravings and food satisfaction (satiety) and blood sugar management. The total amount of calories you eat are important, however, more importantly, if you balance the **correct percentages** and amount of the **macronutrients** along with **muscle mass** and activity level then **food cravings go away. Blood sugar management**

**becomes the major focus for appetite control, fat breakdown, increases in muscle mass and improved energy levels. Counting points, carbohydrate grams, or calories is not enough. Combining foods together at the appropriate times throughout the day is essential. The right mixture of protein, carbohydrate, fat and fiber will keep you satisfied. The hard part is finding this balance while managing your busy lifestyle.**

**A good nutritionist should adjust the clients' nutrition program accordingly. That is exactly what we do specifically for you and your lifestyle. Lastly, always remember it's not your fault, its Americas' problem. It's a Lifestyle... Not A Diet!!!**

**Christopher Fuzy M.S., R.D. the President of Lifestyle Nutrition, has private offices in Fort Lauderdale & Boca Raton Florida. He has practiced Nutrition Counseling for 20 years, has a Masters Degree, and a Bachelors Degree in Clinical Dietetics. Chris completed clinicals in the Texas Medical Center, Houston and was the Chief Clinical Dietitian at Plantation General Hospital. Mr. Fuzy has set up well over 700 physician offices nationwide. For a complimentary consultation please call 954-561-0166 or visit [www.AboutMyDiet.com](http://www.AboutMyDiet.com) & for Health Care Professionals [www.PhysicianWellnessProgram.com](http://www.PhysicianWellnessProgram.com)**

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