

# Health tip: Understanding metabolic syndrome

Metabolic syndrome is a group of conditions that when combined may increase the risk of heart disease, diabetes, stroke and coronary artery disease. These conditions may be managed through healthier lifestyle choices and/or using certain medications.<sup>1</sup>



## Signs and symptoms

An individual is considered to have Metabolic Syndrome when three or more of the following are present:

- A large waistline (abdominal obesity)
  - Men – greater than 40 inches
  - Women – greater than 35 inches
- High blood pressure – greater than 130/85
- High blood sugar, 100 mg/dL or more, or having a diagnosis of Type 2 diabetes
- High blood triglycerides – 150mg/dL or more
- Low HDL (“good”) cholesterol
  - Men – less than 40 mg/dL
  - Women – less than 50 mg/dL<sup>2,3</sup>

## Prevention and treatment

- **Don’t smoke or use other tobacco products**
- **Get plenty of exercise** – aim for 150 minutes of moderate intensity physical activity per week. Some examples of moderate physical activity include a brisk walk, dancing, yardwork or riding a bike.
- **Eat a heart healthy diet** – Adopt a diet rich in whole grains, fruits, vegetables, skinless poultry, fish, nuts, low-fat or fat-free dairy products, lean meats and vegetable protein. Aim for incorporating healthier mono and polyunsaturated fats. Limit processed foods, saturated and trans fats, red meat, sodium and added sugars.
- **Manage stress** – use meditation, mindfulness, deep breathing, exercise, time in nature, music, creating artwork and connecting with friends and family<sup>4</sup>

### Sources:

1. Cleveland Clinic. <https://my.clevelandclinic.org/health/diseases/10783-metabolic-syndrome>. 2023. Accessed August 2024.

2. National Institutes of Health. <https://www.nhlbi.nih.gov/health/metabolic-syndrome>. 2022. Accessed August 2024.

3. American Heart Association. <https://www.heart.org/en/health-topics/metabolic-syndrome/about-metabolic-syndrome>. 2023. Accessed August 2024.

4. American Heart Association. <https://www.heart.org/en/health-topics/metabolic-syndrome/prevention-and-treatment-of-metabolic-syndrome>. 2023. Accessed August 2024.