

The connection between body fat distribution and health risk

Medical studies have shown that 'weight management' through the reduction of excess body fat plays a fundamental role in fighting disease and maintaining superior health. The research also linked the stress of excess body fat to major physical conditions such as, cancer, stroke, hypertension, and heart disease.

Without a doubt, excess body fat is a health hazard and should be avoided. One of the best ways to find out if you are normal, overweight, or obese, is by determining your BMI, or Body Mass Index. To calculate your Body Mass Index, take your weight (in kilograms), and divide it by your height (in meters) squared. A score of:

- 25.0 - 30.0 means you are overweight,
- 30.0 - 40.0 points to obesity,
- 40 and above classifies you as morbidly obese.

Since [BMI](#) describes the body weight relative to height, it is strongly associated with the total body fat content in adults - children's calculations are more complicated, because they also have to take gender and age into account.

Body shape and body fat distribution is important in determining a number of health risks. How your body is shaped, and where the fat bulges are hiding, is indeed relevant to your health. For example, the fat cells around the abdomen will release their fat more eagerly into the bloodstream than other fat cells. This means that 'pot-belly' victims are more likely at risk to get narrowing arteries, diabetes and cancer. Fat mainly deposited in the lower half of the body, such as the buttocks, thighs and hips does not appear to have the same risk factor. Also, weight deposits in the waist region are generally more characteristic for men than women.

Are you at risk for disease?

Unlike popular belief, not just a big person is at risk for disease. A small individual with large abdominal fat stores (i.e. a 'pot belly') increases his/her chances to get sick as well. The association between health risks and body fat distribution is usually determined as follows:

- Least risk - slim built without pot belly
- Moderate risk - overweight without pot belly
- Moderate to high risk - slim built with pot belly
- High risk - overweight with pot belly.

Waist circumference health risk indicator by gender

Waist Circumference indicates medical problems by men and women differently.

In men:

- 94 cm to 101 cm - risk increases
- 102 cm or more - risk increases substantially.

In women:

- 80 cm to 87 cm - risk increases
- 88 cm or more - risk increases substantially.

Other vital information

- Most people store their body fat in two distinct areas: around their hips (pear shape) and around their middle (apple shape).
- A person's genes will increase the tendency to develop fat around the waist.
- Being sufficiently physically active and not smoking will help decrease body fat.
- Eating unsaturated fat instead of saturated fat can decrease the risk of developing abdominal obesity.
- Age counts. Men older than 45, and postmenopausal women, all with too much body fat increase their chances to get severely sick.

So, if you are concerned about your health, why not take the time to determine your BMI?

About the Author

Austrian Lifestyle & Fitness offers free [BMI](#) tools including a [BMI Calculator](#) to help you get your weight into a healthy weight range.

Source: <http://www.healthreleases.com>