

3. Improving body composition

Body composition is about much more than your weight. Your body composition is the ratio of fat to muscle and other tissues in your body. Improving your body composition is another significant part of dealing with metabolic syndrome. This is best achieved using an individually tailored nutrition and lifestyle programme which also incorporates highly nutritious dietary supplementation.

The good news is that one single, all encompassing programme can help to support all aspects of metabolic syndrome. Such a programme also needs to include some form of dietary supplementation to ensure that you are providing your body with optimum levels of the nutrients it specifically needs for improved body composition, cardiovascular health and blood sugar support.



Features to look for in a supplement drink to support metabolic syndrome and help improve body composition:

Soy or whey protein based nutrient drink that can be used as a meal replacement or healthy snack to support blood sugar balance. Whey protein has the highest biological value of any naturally occurring protein.

High fibre to support cardiovascular and gastrointestinal health as well as blood sugar balance and body composition.

Calorie controlled, with an optimum level of approximately 150 calories per serving.

Chromium is an important mineral to support metabolic syndrome as it is directly involved in supporting the body's blood sugar regulating mechanisms.

Folate blend – a blend of body-ready folates for cardiovascular and hormonal support.

B vitamins to support blood sugar balance and insulin regulation.

Calcium and Magnesium to support cardiovascular health; particularly important for healthy blood pressure control.

A full complement of essential vitamins and minerals for comprehensive all round support of optimum health.

No artificial sweeteners, colours or flavours.



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Metabolic Syndrome

How is your body shape affecting your health?



Read on to find out how nutrition can support metabolic syndrome

Most people are concerned about their body shape because it affects the way they look, and most efforts to change body shape are made purely to address this. But what if your body shape was actually telling you more about your health than just that you are perhaps a little overweight?

The two most common body shapes, which are easily identifiable, are the classic 'apple' and 'pear' body shapes.

Which one are you, apple or pear?

An 'apple-shaped' body tends to have fat above the waist, whereas a 'pear-shaped' body carries fat below the waist. As a rough guide, men whose waist circumference is more than 40 inches, and women, more than 35 inches would fall into the 'apple' body shape category.

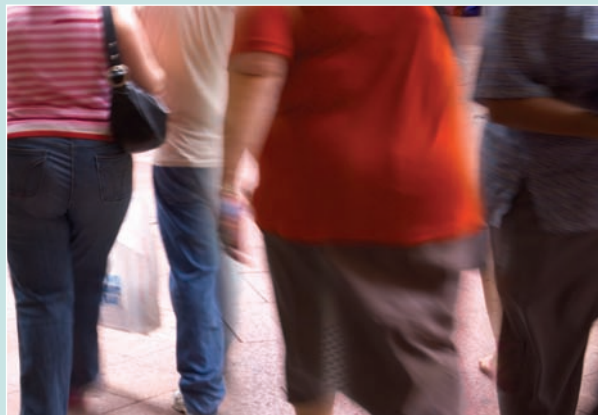


Whilst an apple is commonly regarded as an extremely nutritious food to eat, unfortunately, having an 'apple' body shape is a completely different story. Those people that do have an 'apple' body shape are at much higher risk of developing serious chronic health conditions if they do not make lifestyle changes to improve their shape. Dr Ahmed Kissebah, a Professor of Medicine at the Medical College of Wisconsin, led groundbreaking research in the early 1980's on the health risks associated with body shapes. He says, "Thirty years ago, we didn't know why obesity was so dangerous and we didn't know that certain forms of obesity were worse than others. Apple-shaped bodies have the worst impact on health. Pear-shaped people, who carry most of their weight below the waist, have lower risks of negative health effects".

This is a revelation to most people, who often realise that being overweight is bad for their health but don't understand the relevance of actual body shape.

So why is the apple shape such bad news?

In an apple-shaped body, fat is inside the abdomen, among the internal organs, whereas pear-shaped people tend to store fat below the waist. People with apple-shaped bodies tend to have higher rates of insulin resistance (the physiological precursor to diabetes) and abnormal blood fat levels.



Apple body shape - risk factor for metabolic syndrome

The apple body shape is also a classic signal of metabolic syndrome. If you haven't yet heard of metabolic syndrome, it is probably because it is a condition that has only recently been defined by the medical community. Dr Kissebah notes, "In the past 15 years, it has gone from an observation to a syndrome; now it is a worldwide phenomenon".

So exactly what is metabolic syndrome?

Metabolic syndrome is not a disease but is a precursor to stroke, diabetes, heart disease, and kidney disease. It is extremely serious and unfortunately, is dramatically on the increase – especially among people who lead sedentary lifestyles and are overweight. Metabolic syndrome, whilst not specifically a disease in itself, is a cluster of interrelated conditions that can severely damage a person's health.

Characteristic symptoms of metabolic syndrome:

- Insulin resistance – a decreased ability for the body to process glucose effectively
- An overweight, apple-shaped body
- High blood fats
- High cholesterol
- High blood pressure

What can I do about it?

1. Identification

The first step to dealing with metabolic syndrome is identification. Because it is only recently that the medical profession have defined this condition, many people are completely unaware of its existence. We are all well versed in the importance of having cholesterol levels and blood pressure checked, but what about checking for the risk factors of metabolic syndrome?

By identifying metabolic syndrome early and working to lessen its impact, you can reduce your risk of developing conditions such as stroke, diabetes, heart disease, and kidney disease. Your health care practitioner, perhaps in conjunction with your GP, will be able to help identify your risk of developing metabolic syndrome. Even if you only have some of the above classic symptoms of metabolic syndrome it's worth taking action to prevent this syndrome early on.

2. Nutritional intervention

If you have metabolic syndrome, your practitioner will work with you to develop strategies to reduce your risks of developing the more serious conditions. It is now well accepted that diet and lifestyle factors, including exercise, are the mainstays of reducing your risks.

Nutritional intervention includes strategies to improve cardiovascular health and also support blood sugar balance, as problems with insulin resistance and blood sugar regulation are such a major part of the metabolic syndrome. Your health care practitioner will be able to guide you towards specific dietary recommendations to improve both of these factors.