

June 7, 2019

What is all the Buzz about Waist Circumference?

Waist circumference measurements can be a significant indicator of your health. Health risks associated with large waist circumference are numerous. According to the National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute¹, "A high waist circumference is associated with an increased risk factor for type 2 diabetes, dyslipidemia, hypertension, and cardio-vascular disease". NHLBI states a high waist circumference is defined as greater than 40 inches in males and greater than 35 inches in non-pregnant females.

Weight for adults 25 and older is linked to increased heart damage and highlights the importance of long-term weight control for reducing heart disease risk," according to findings from research at Johns Hopkins University School of Medicine². Research there suggests ". . . that even in the absence of such heart disease risk factors as high blood pressure, diabetes or kidney disease, the number of years spent obese or overweight contributes to the higher likelihood of heart damage."

Being overweight can cause various types of cancers such as: esophagus; cancers of the breast [in post-menopausal women], colon and rectum, endometrium, gallbladder, gastric cardia, kidney, liver, ovary, pancreas, and thyroid; meningioma; and multiple myeloma according to the Center of Disease Control (CDC)³. According to an article published in *The Lancet* by Sung, H. PhD. ⁴the risk of developing cancer has increased in younger adults for obesity-related cancers, with a steeper increase in progressively younger ages.

So what does all this mean? A waist circumference over 40 inches for males and 35 inches for non-pregnant females due to excessive abdominal adipose tissue (fat) has been shown to have negative impacts on your physical health. Plus, the longer the abdominal adipose tissue is carried on the body, the more your health can be damaged. Being healthy physically and emotionally helps prevent disease, deal with stress, improve job performance, and more importantly provide a life outside of and beyond work.

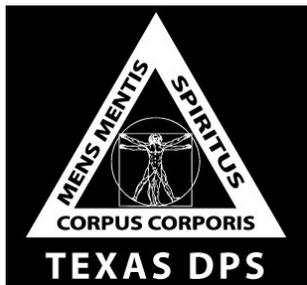
It is not too late! Making changes in the food you eat will provide the greatest benefits to waist circumference along with increasing activity levels and getting adequate sleep. The Fitness Wellness Unit is available to assist you in your endeavors for a healthier lifestyle. We offer scheduled body composition measurements, metabolic rate measurements, and one-on-one consultations can be scheduled. We also offer education through webinars, nutrition information, and more on the Fitness Wellness Unit website.

- National Health, Lung, and Blood Institute. (n.d.) According to Waist Circumference. Retrieved June 6, 2019 from https://www.nhlbi.nih.gov/health-pro/guidelines/current/obesity-guidelines/e_textbook/txgd/4142.htm.
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Wellness Tips
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June 14, 2019

The Importance of Water

Water is vital for human life. Approximately 60% of the human body is water and about 75% of Americans are operating in a dehydrated state on a daily basis. Dehydration can affect the ability to think clearly, cause sleepiness, and increase moodiness. The benefits of being appropriately hydrated include:

- 1. Weight loss:** Swap sugary drinks out for water and drink water with a meal for a sense of fullness in an effort to help with weight loss.
- 2. Boosts performance during exercise:** Dehydration can reduce performance, and studies show that being only 2% dehydrated can have an effect (running a slower pace, not being able to lift as much weight, etc.)
- 3. Airways:** When dehydrated, airways are restricted by the body in an effort to minimize water loss. This can make asthma and allergies worse.
- 4. Runs the digestive system:** The bowel needs water to work properly. If the body becomes dehydrated, this is one of the first places the body will pull water from to deliver to more important areas of the body (brain and heart) resulting in constipation.
- 5. Flushes out body waste:** Water is required for the processes of sweating and removal of urine and feces.
- 6. Lubricates joints:** Cartilage contains about 80% water, and long-term dehydration can reduce the joint's shock absorbing ability, leading to joint pain.
- 7. Forms saliva and mucus:** Saliva helps to digest food and mucus helps to keep the mouth, nose and eyes moist.
- 8. Delivers oxygen throughout the body:** Blood is more than 90% water, and one of its main functions is to carry oxygen to different parts of the body. When dehydrated, the blood becomes thicker, and oxygen is not carried as efficiently.
- 9. Regulates body temperature:** Sweating helps prevent the human body from overheating when the temperature is high. To maintain stable body temperature, both sweat and allowing the sweat to evaporate are necessary.
- 10. Maintains blood pressure:** Lack of water can cause blood to become thicker, increasing blood pressure.

This is just a short list of the amazing things that water does in the human body. Participants in the Nutrition Challenge have been tasked with drinking half their body weight in ounces of water this week. Start tracking how much water you consume daily and make sure dehydration is not an issue.

McIntosh, J. (2018, July 16). "Fifteen benefits of drinking water." *Medical News Today*. Retrieved from <https://www.medicalnewstoday.com/articles/290814.php>.

Carlton, A., & Orr, R. M. (2015, December). The effects of fluid loss on physical performance: A critical review. *Journal of Sport and Health Science*, 4(4),357-363

June 21, 2019

Men's Health Month

Did you know that, on average, men die five years younger than women? They are also less likely than women to get routine physicals and preventive care. According to 2018 data, ERS found that 51.1% of females enrolled in a HealthSelectplan had a preventive screening, while only 36.5% of males enrolled in a HealthSelectplan had a preventive screening in calendar year 2018.

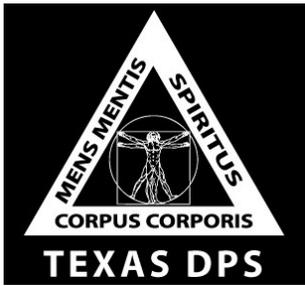
Many ailments, like a twisted ankle or sore throat, can be felt and detected on their own. However, there are also a number of issues that are silent killers, such as high blood pressure or cholesterol issues. Without a preventative care appointment, you may never know and miss the opportunity for early prevention strategies.

While there may be many different reasons that men do not go to the doctor, a few strategies to help incorporate this important visit into your year include:

- Plan your annual visit each year around your birthday or another date that you can remember.
- Make your annual visit appointment with your spouse or a family member. Go together, have breakfast, lunch, or dinner together depending on what time of day it is.
- Find a provider that you like and trust. Ask for recommendations from friends and colleagues, and use the BCBSTX provider finder tool if you are a HealthSelect of Texas or Consumer Directed HealthSelect participant.

Learn more about Men's Health Week and why it is important to encourage early detection and treatment of disease among men by going to the National Men's Health Week website. On Friday, June 17, you can wear blue to support the health and well-being of men.





June 28, 2019

Did you know that per the Centers for Disease and Control, only 1 in 10 adults get enough fruits or vegetables each day?

Vegetables are a great source of fiber. Fiber helps maintain a healthy weight and lowers the risk of diabetes, heart disease and some types of cancer. Fruit is great as it contains a multitude of vitamins, minerals and fiber while tasting delicious. The more colors added to the diet, the more nutrients the body is receiving.

Make the goal this week to consume as many different colors as possible, while enjoying fruit and vegetables.

Below are a few tips and tricks to make this a little easier:

- Eat seasonal: When we consume vegetables and fruit that are in season, they tend to be less pricy, and taste more flavorful. View a list of seasonal food [here](#).
- Store fruit and vegetables properly: When fruit and vegetables are not stored properly, they tend to ripen or rot faster. Fruits like apples, bananas and pears give off ethylene gas, which can make other produce ripen and rot faster, so these should be kept away from other fruits.
- Wash fruit right before eating: To help keep fruit fresh for longer, wash the fruit right before you consume it, rather than when you put it in the refrigerator.
- Keep vegetables and fruit separate: When storing fruit and vegetables, always keep them separate to keep them fresher longer. For a detailed list of where to store vegetables and fruits, go [here](#).
- Fresh, canned and frozen: All produce counts! Canned or frozen fruits and vegetables are convenient to have on hand for times that you do not have fresh produce or cannot get to the store. In addition, frozen items are typically flash frozen at their prime to provide the most nutrients. Since they do not expire quickly, you will not waste money, which sometimes happens with fresh produce that goes bad.

Tips for picking canned and frozen fruits and vegetables:

- Watch for sodium: Sodium can be added to canned foods for preservation. Look for low sodium, reduced sodium or no salt added labels, or rinse the canned item. Also, look at the ingredients, the fewer ingredients the better (usually you can find canned vegetables and fruit with only the item and water).
- Watch for added sugar: Look for fruit that is canned in water or its own juice. Frozen fruit should not have any sugar added.

Bottom line, there are lots of options to add fruits and vegetables to your diet and a plethora of benefits.

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