

Metabolic Syndrome- The Silent Killer

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Do you suffer from stress, migraines, high blood pressure, acne, erectile dysfunction, menstrual disorders, or depression? You may not realise it but all of these symptoms have been linked to a condition called metabolic syndrome. **Metabolic syndrome is a serious, life threatening condition, which carries a massive cardiovascular risk.** Unfortunately, the prevalence of this syndrome is on the rise, with over five million Australians and in more than one million New Zealanders being diagnosed with Metabolic Syndrome.

Metabolic syndrome is a recognised cluster of serious cardiovascular risk factors such as obesity, high blood pressure, low level of 'good' cholesterol and high blood glucose. Those with metabolic syndrome do not suffer from just one chronic disease, they have many. A single person seeking treatment may have hypertension, diabetes, cardiovascular disease and obesity all at the same time.

To be diagnosed with metabolic syndrome you need to have three out of these five conditions;

- Visceral obesity (excess fat inside the abdominal cavity, surrounding the internal organs)
- High blood pressure
- High triglycerides
- Low level of 'good' cholesterol (HDL)
- High fasting glucose.

Any one of these conditions increase your risk of cardiovascular disease and for each additional condition present, your risk is increased by over 500 per cent. **Although you may only have one or two of these conditions, as each one increases your chances of developing cardiovascular disease, treatment should be sought as soon as possible.** Metabolic syndrome may also increase your risk of developing other dangerous conditions such as diabetes, cancer and fatty liver.

To correct the syndrome it's essential to reverse the cardiovascular risk factors that are developing and prevent future, more serious complications.

The symptoms of metabolic syndrome are related to three key factors:

- **Insulin resistance**
- **Visceral (*abdominal*) obesity**
- **Endothelial dysfunction.**

The endothelium is the lining of the blood vessels and dysfunction of the endothelium includes blood vessel constriction, high blood pressure, atherosclerosis and reduced blood flow to tissues.

Insulin is a hormone secreted by the pancreas and it helps the body to utilize blood glucose by binding with receptors on cells, like a key would fit into a lock. Once unlocked, glucose can pass into the cell to be used for energy or stored for later. Insulin resistance occurs when the cells of the body become resistant to the effects of insulin and the normal amount of insulin is unable to unlock the door to the cells. It's a vicious cycle in which each of the key factors worsen the others.

So what can we do to naturally treat metabolic syndrome?

The key to breaking down metabolic syndrome is to correct the underlying factors. This can be done through using a powerful combination of insulin-sensitising natural substances such as caiapo, cinnamon, ginseng, and chromium to repair your glucose and fat metabolism. Natural substances such as these have shown to improve blood glucose control, cholesterol, triglycerides and insulin resistance. Others such as magnesium and taurine demonstrate improvement in cardiovascular risk factors including improved glucose tolerance, insulin resistance and blood vessel dilation.

For best results, natural substances such as these need to be coupled with an effective weight loss program, designed to reduce fat mass and to reduce cholesterol, triglycerides and glucose levels. This helps to correct obesity as a risk factor, as well as reducing other cardiovascular risk factors and reversing metabolic syndrome.

Not all diets are equal.

Be sure to seek professional advice as some diets, in particular the traditional low fat, high carbohydrate diets, have shown to worsen metabolic syndrome, in particular triglycerides and good and bad cholesterol. This can be confusing as it's these traditional low fat, high carbohydrate diets that are generally advised for high cholesterol, blood sugar imbalances, weight loss and heart conditions.

On the upside, recent information has shown that the sort of dietary modifications that achieve positive changes in cardiovascular risk factors include reduced carbohydrate intake, moderate high-quality protein and adequate "good" fats. It is worth noting too, that even modest fat loss (seven to ten per cent of body weight) results in decreased fat mass, blood pressure, glucose, "bad" cholesterol and triglyceride levels. A change in these factors will provide a reduction in your cardiovascular risk and positively change metabolic syndrome.

Often, numerous other symptoms occur at the same time and include erectile dysfunction and impotence in men, fatigue, hormone imbalances, acne, migraines, tinnitus and depression. Depending on their severity and the degree to which they impact your life, these factors may need to be addressed early in your treatment. Consulting a qualified and experienced practitioner will help you to establish whether something needs to be addressed immediately, or if it will resolve through correcting the metabolic syndrome.

You may be wondering how on earth you got this way in the first place! In general, the most common culprits that initiate metabolic dysfunction include high calorie, high carbohydrate diets, lack of exercise and chronic stress. Perhaps this is an example of the long-term effects of our Western lifestyle habits. Stress in particular is a big problem and even in the presence of a healthy diet and regular exercise, it's enough to trigger the metabolic changes that eventually may result in metabolic syndrome. Therefore to treat the condition effectively and holistically, you must address any stress in your life and your reaction to stress.

When natural measures are employed to lose fat and improve cardiovascular risk factors, positive changes are achieved time and time again. With proper guidance and support, the syndrome can be turned around and the original metabolic dysfunction corrected.