

# Diet and Exercise for Metabolic Syndrome: Care Instructions



## Your Care Instructions

Metabolic syndrome is the name for a group of health problems. It includes having too much fat around your waist and high blood pressure. It also includes high triglycerides, high blood sugar, and low levels of healthy (HDL) cholesterol. These problems make it more likely you will have a heart attack or stroke or get diabetes.

Your family history (your genes) can cause metabolic syndrome. So can unhealthy eating habits and not getting enough exercise.

You can help lower your risk of heart attack, stroke, and diabetes if you eat healthy foods and get more exercise. It may be hard to make these lifestyle changes. But even small changes can help.

**Follow-up care is a key part of your treatment and safety.** Be sure to make and go to all appointments, and call your doctor if you are having problems. It's also a good idea to know your test results and keep a list of the medicines you take.

## How can you care for yourself at home?

### Eat more fruits and vegetables

- Fruits and vegetables have nutrients to help protect you from heart disease and high blood pressure. They are low in fat and high in fiber. Dark green, orange, and yellow ones are the healthiest.
- Keep lots of vegetables ready for snacks.
- Buy fruit that is in season. Then put it where you can see it so you will want to eat it.
- Cook dishes that have a lot of vegetables. Soups and stir-fries are good choices.

### Limit saturated fats

- Read food labels, and try to avoid saturated fats. They increase your risk of heart disease.
- Use olive or canola oil when you cook.
- Bake, broil, grill, or steam foods. Avoid fried foods.
- Limit how much high-fat meat you eat. This includes hot dogs and sausages. When you prepare meat, cut off all the fat.

- You can replace high-fat meat with fish and skinless poultry. You can also try products made from soybeans, like tofu. Soybeans may be very good for your heart.
- Choose low-fat or fat-free milk and dairy products.

## **Eat foods high in fiber**

- Foods high in fiber may reduce your cholesterol. And they may give you important vitamins and minerals. Good examples are oatmeal, cooked dried beans, brown rice, citrus fruits, and apples.
- Eat whole-grain breads and cereals. They have more fiber than white bread or pastries.

## **Limit high-sugar foods**

- Limit foods and drinks that are high in sugar. Some examples are soda pop, sugar-sweetened fruit drinks, candy, and many desserts.
- Limit the amount of sugar, honey, and other sweeteners that you add to food and drinks.
- Choose water instead of soda pop or other sugar-sweetened drinks.
- Limit fruit juice.

## **Limit salt and sodium**

- You can help lower your blood pressure if you limit salt and sodium.
- If you take the salt shaker off the table, it may be easier to use less salt. You can also try using half the salt in a recipe. And you can avoid adding salt to cooking water for pasta, rice, and potatoes.
- Try to eat fewer snacks, fast foods, and other high-salt, processed foods. Check labels so you know how much sodium a food has.
- Choose canned goods (soups, vegetables, and beans) that are low in sodium.

## **Get regular exercise**

- Get more exercise. Make sure your doctor knows when you start a new exercise program. Even small amounts of exercise will help you get stronger and have more energy. It can also help you manage your weight and your stress.
- Walking is a good choice. Little by little, increase the amount you walk every day. Try for at least 30 minutes on most days of the week.

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