

## Is Your Belt Too Snug?



Carrying extra weight around your belly is an indication that you have increased intra-abdominal fat. Also called *visceral fat*, intra-abdominal fat is fat that surrounds the internal organs in your abdomen (or stomach area). This type of fat is most dangerous to your health. It increases your risk for high blood pressure, high cholesterol, low HDL (or “good”) cholesterol, high blood fats (or triglycerides), metabolic syndrome, type 2 diabetes, heart disease, stroke, insulin resistance, type 2 diabetes, certain cancers, sleep apnea, and premature death.

The best way to gauge whether you have an unhealthy amount of abdominal fat is to measure your waist circumference. According to the National Institutes of Health, women with a waist size greater than 35 inches and men

with a waist size greater than 40 inches have a significantly higher risk of disease than those with healthy waist sizes. For best health and lowest disease risk, waist circumference should be:

- Below 32 inches in women.
- Below 37 inches in men.

The best way to lose belly fat is to exercise regularly and eat a healthful diet, being sure to eat fewer calories than you burn during a day.

*National Institutes of Health. 2010.*

### How to Measure Your Waist

- Wrap a tape measure around your bare waist at the level of your navel (belly button).
- Pull the tape firmly (but don't “suck in your tummy”).
- Checking your waist circumference periodically to see how you are doing is a better way to measure health risk than weighing yourself.

## Social Networks Are Beneficial to Health

Feeling loved and supported helps you manage stress and contributes to your physical and emotional wellbeing. Research shows that parents who are experiencing financial stress are more prone to depression when there is a lack of social support. This is especially common in rural areas.

Healthy interactions with your family, friends, and coworkers can protect against negative thinking. According to the National Council on Family Relations, so can social support mechanisms such as community groups, churches, and school or sports-related activities. Many families are spread out across the country – some around the world. So while you might not be able to spend every weekend with family, you can still benefit from regular contact with a social support network. Here are some tips to help you nurture relationships, both far and near.

- Phone home, send cards, send an email, and write letters. Use video communication programs

like Skype to visit with loved ones anywhere there is computer access.

- Create mini-scrapbooks of family memories and send them to those you love.
- Plan a picnic in your backyard, a weekend camping trip, or a family reunion.
- Volunteer for a cause that is important to you.
- Take a class to learn something you've always wanted to pursue.
- Play tag or soccer in the park.
- Attend poetry readings or concerts by local artists.
- Be a regular at your town's Farmers Market.

*National Council on Family Relations. 2009.*



## Keep Alert on the Job to Keep Safe

On average, 14 U.S. workers die each day from workplace injuries. About 4 out of 100 employees suffer a nonfatal workplace injury or illness.

Men account for nearly 93% of all on-the-job deaths. Most fatal workplace injuries are due to highway incidents, falls, being struck by an object, and homicides. For a safer workplace:

- Keep a clean work area.
- Use safeguards to help prevent falls and other injuries.
- Use seat belts, and drive safely.
- Come to work rested, sober, and alert.
- Participate in safety inservices and other training programs.
- Know the appropriate procedures and processes for safety.
- Perform regular maintenance on equipment/machinery.
- Report any hazardous conditions to your supervisor.

*Occupational Safety and Health Administration. 2010.*

## Plan a Safe Picnic

Using good food storage procedures will give you peace of mind and safety. Getting sick from food poisoning is no picnic!

- When creating your picnic menu, focus on foods that don't require refrigeration.
- Keep cooked foods refrigerated until it's time to leave home. Then fill an insulated cooler with sufficient ice or gel packs to keep the food at 40 degrees Fahrenheit (F).

**Hint:** Divide large amounts of perishable food into small containers. Serve one container at a time, keeping the unopened containers in the cooler until needed.



- While traveling to and from your destination, pack the cooler inside the air-conditioned car (not the trunk if it's a warm day). At the picnic, keep the cooler in the shade.
- Except when it's being served, food should be stored in the cooler with

the lid closed. Any perishable food left outside for more than an hour should be discarded. Likewise, if you were gone more than 4 or 5 hours and your perishables no longer feel "refrigerator cool," don't use the leftovers.

*National Institutes of Health. 2010.*

The U.S. Department of Agriculture offers more information about keeping foods safe as you picnic and travel this summer: [www.foodsafety.gov/keep/events/summervacations/index.html](http://www.foodsafety.gov/keep/events/summervacations/index.html)

## Citrus Fruits Are Good for You



Most people know that citrus fruits are good sources of vitamin C. But did you know that they also contain an impressive list of other essential nutrients? Oranges, grapefruit, lemons, limes, and other citrus fruits contain fiber, potassium, folic acid, calcium, B vitamins (thiamine, niacin, B-6), phosphorus, magnesium, copper, riboflavin, healthy carbohydrates, and a variety of phytochemicals. In addition, citrus fruits are fat-free, sodium-free, and cholesterol-free.

A recent study found that citrus helps neutralize inflammation in the body that has been caused by eating high-fat, high-carbohydrate meals. Inflammation has been linked with increased risk of cardiovascular disease, diabetes, and cancer. Previous studies have shown that citrus helps reduce the risk of heart disease, high blood pressure, stroke, cancer, birth defects, anemia, and cataracts. Because they are full of fiber and are a healthy carbohydrate, citrus fruits can help with weight loss as well.

While citrus fruits are healthy, don't go on a citrus-only diet. No single fruit or vegetable provides all of the nutrients you need to be healthy. Instead, eat citrus fruits often, along with a wide variety of other fruits and vegetables.

*Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations. 2010*

*American Journal of Clinical Nutrition. April 2010.*

### Rainbow Fruit Salad

You can't go wrong with this National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute recipe. It's juicy, fresh, naturally low in fat and sodium, and cholesterol free. Enjoy it as a salad or a dessert.

- 1 large mango, peeled, diced
- 2 C fresh blueberries
- 2 bananas, sliced
- 2 C fresh strawberries, halved
- 2 C seedless grapes
- 2 nectarines, unpeeled, sliced
- 1 kiwi fruit, peeled, sliced

For more recipes, go to: [www.nhlbi.nih.gov/health/public/heart/other/ktb\\_recipebk/ktb\\_recipebk.pdf](http://www.nhlbi.nih.gov/health/public/heart/other/ktb_recipebk/ktb_recipebk.pdf)



### ASK THE *Wellness* DOCTOR

**Q:** What can I do to prevent excessive gas and acid reflux?

**A:** Go to [www.wellsource.info/wn/ask-acid.pdf](http://www.wellsource.info/wn/ask-acid.pdf) to read the answer from Don Hall, DrPH, CHES.

To ask your question, email: [paulaw@wellsource.com](mailto:paulaw@wellsource.com), subject line: Ask the Wellness Doctor. Emails with any other subject line will be directed to the spam folder.