

# Do you have the Sitting Disease?

## What is the *Sitting Disease*?

Coined by the scientific community, it refers to the **metabolic syndrome and the ill-effects of an overly sedentary lifestyle**. It is not a diagnosable disease at this time.

**Metabolic Syndrome** is an umbrella term for high cholesterol, high blood pressure and large waist size increasing risk for ...

- Type 2 Diabetes
- Heart Disease
- Certain Cancers

**Dr. Owen, PhD** Australia's  
Baker IDI Heart and Diabetes  
Institute

"It seems highly likely that **the longer you sit, the higher your risk** [of cancer]. This phenomenon is not dependent on body weight or how much exercise people do."

## Sit **Less**

### *How much do I actually sit?*

- 50-70% people spend 6 or more hours sitting a day.
- 20-35% spend 4 or more hours watching TV a day.

## Live **Longer**?

### *If I cut sitting time by **half**, life expectancy **increases** by ...*

- 2 years (if I sit less than 3 hours per day).
- 1.4 years (if I watch less than 2 hours of TV per day).



"For people who sit most of the day, their risk of **heart attack** is about the same as **smoking**."

– Martha Grogan, Cardiologist

"We've become so sedentary that **30** minutes a day at the gym may not counteract the detrimental effects of **8, 9, or 10** hours of sitting."

- Genevieve Healy, PhD

**Make Time + Break Time = Cancer Protection**

**It's not just enough to make time for physical activity (PA). You must ALSO break sitting time even if you are regularly active!**

**Make Time for PA**

Canada's PA Guideline: Get 150 min per week of moderate to vigorous physical activity (ex. 30 minutes per day of brisk walking or bike riding).



**Break Sedentary Time**

Take a walking or standing break every hour. More breaks are associated with lower waist circumference, BMI and triglycerides.



**Reduced risk of ...**

Premature death  
Heart disease  
Stroke  
High blood pressure

Type 2 Diabetes  
Osteoporosis  
Overweight and obesity  
Some cancers

**Practical Ways to Sit Less!**

**In the Office**

- Try at-desk stretches: arm-over-head, neck rotations, torso twists.
- Try at-desk exercises: heel lifts, toe lifts, thigh and buttock squeezes.
- Replace a desk chair with an exercise ball.
- Try walking meetings.
- Walk to a colleague's desk; skip the email.
- Set a timer to stand every hour.
- Stand while on the phone.
- Walk or bike to work.
- Park further.

**At Home**

- Walk while on the phone.
- When watching TV, get up to change the channels.
- During commercials, stand up to walk up and down the stairs.
- Go for a stroll with someone after dinner.
- Don't bring a chair if you're going to the park or watching your kid's soccer game.
- Limit TV or computer time by going for a bike ride, borrowing a yoga/fitness DVD, or doing something active with a friend.



Tip of the Day: Get into the habit to ask someone, "Walk with me." You decrease your risk of heart attack and will probably be more attentive in your walking meeting!

## Women, Heads Up!

“Heart disease is the leading cause of death among women – and one of the most preventable!” (Harvard Health, 2013)

### Gender Differences in Coronary Risk

<b>Blood Lipids</b>	After menopause, women have <u>higher concentrations of total cholesterol</u> than men do. Estrogen no longer increases HDL (good cholesterol) but decreases LDL (bad cholesterol).
<b>Diabetes</b>	Diabetes increases risk of heart disease in women more than men usually because there are more added risk factors (obesity, hypertension, high cholesterol).
<b>Metabolic Syndrome</b>	Metabolic syndrome is the <u>most important risk factor</u> for having heart attacks at an <u>unusually early age</u> in women.
<b>Smoking</b>	Women are <u>twice as likely</u> to have a heart attack than male smokers.

If women are at greater risk, prevention becomes even *more* important.

1. **Make time and break time.** Get at least 30 minutes of moderate to vigorous PA per day AND take breaks every hour to reduce sitting time.
2. **Don't smoke.** Women's chances of having a heart attack doubles if they smoke as few as 1-4 cigarettes per day. Regular exposure to other smokers can also increase risk.
3. **Eat healthfully.** Include whole grains, variety of fruits and vegetables, nuts, fatty fish and lower intake of trans fat.
4. **Reduce stress.** Risk for heart disease increases if you're stressed or chronically stressed. Try reducing stress through exercise, adequate sleep, relaxation and meditation techniques.



Resources: <http://www.csep.ca>, <http://www.health.harvard.edu>, <http://www.juststand.org>, <http://www.mayoclinic.com>, <http://medcom.uiowa.edu>, <http://www.aicr.org>