



Women
35" or less

Men
40" or less

What Your Waist Size Says About Your Health

Pick up a tape measure to find out

What's your waist size? If you were going to tailor a suit or dress, you'd need to know to get the right fit.

But it's also a measure that can tell you a lot about your health.

Your waist size is normal if it's 35 inches or less for women or 40 inches or less for men, according to the National Institutes of Health.

If your waist size is bigger than this, you're at risk for health problems like diabetes, heart disease, and high blood pressure. A bigger belly means you're storing fat, a risk factor for chronic disease.

How to measure your waist size:

1. Wrap a tape measure around your waist. (Note: The tape measure should be just above your hip bone near your belly button.)

VIDEO

Why waist size matters
tinyurl.com/y9gv7q3j

2. Breathe in, then out, normally.
3. Pull the tape measure snug.
4. Record your waist size.

If your waist size is larger than normal, set a goal to improve it. Be active 30 to 60 minutes a day. Eat more fruits, vegetables, whole grains, legumes, nuts, and seeds, and less junk food.²

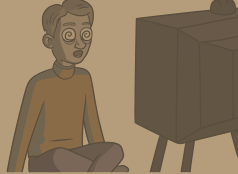
Set a small goal, like losing one pound a week, until your waist size is in the normal range. Then keep up those healthy habits for life. @

THE Y AXIS



The Trouble With Binge-Watching

Missed the last season of *The Walking Dead*? Just binge-watch it after work.



Sounds like a good idea, right? Not exactly.

A new study suggests that binge watching before bed can lead to sleep problems and fatigue.¹

Researcher Lise Exelman says binge watching keeps your brain active. If you're focused on what you saw, what happened, and the next episode, before bed, it can be hard to fall asleep.

If you are going to binge-watch, turn off TV and electronics at least an hour before bed.

Or you may feel more like the walking dead the next day.

COMMENTS?

Send comments to the editor:
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What Happens If You're Always Stressed Out?

5 health risks linked to chronic stress

Are you stressed out? Work, relationships, money problems, family matters, and major life events can be stressful. It happens. A little stress is a normal part of life.

But what if you're always feeling stressed out? Researchers at Northwestern University wanted to find out.³

They looked at 80 studies on stress and health problems. They found that people living with chronic stress also have higher levels of the stress hormone cortisol throughout the day.

Cortisol helps your body turn food into energy. It helps your body respond to stress. And it helps control blood pressure.

But instead of normal ups and downs in cortisol levels, the most stressed out people don't see a change. Levels stay high.

And that's a problem. Researchers found that people with chronic stress and elevated cortisol levels are more likely to suffer from these five health problems:

- ✓ Depression
- ✓ Fatigue
- ✓ Obesity
- ✓ Cancer
- ✓ Autoimmune disorders





RECIPE Cashew Nut Cream

Looking for a sweet treat that's easy to make, has just 161 calories per serving, and only requires three ingredients? Give this Cashew Nut Cream recipe a try:⁵

Ingredients

- 1 C cashews, raw
- 4 canned pear halves, drained
- ½ tsp vanilla extract

Directions

1. Place all ingredients in a food processor.
2. Puree several minutes. Use spatula to make sure all ingredients are pureed, smooth and creamy.
3. Serve and enjoy, or store in refrigerator. Makes 6 servings.

Fiber-Rich Foods Help Lower Cholesterol

Healthy diet can reduce the need for medication



What's your cholesterol level? If you don't know, or haven't checked it in a while, schedule a simple blood test with your doctor.

A normal total cholesterol level is less than 200 mg/dL. If it's higher than that, it raises the risk for a heart attack or stroke.

And about half of all adults in the U.S. have high cholesterol. Left unchecked, cholesterol, can slowly block blood vessels and arteries without any symptoms.

Food vs. medicine to control cholesterol

Statin drugs are widely used to control cholesterol. But new research suggests a fiber-rich diet can also be a good way to control cholesterol.

Data from the American College of Cardiology and the American Heart

MORE

11 foods that lower cholesterol
tinyurl.com/yaer37lt

Association shows lifestyle medicine and nutrition can help control cholesterol.

In a University of Toronto study, researchers compared the results of a fiber-rich diet to statin drugs to control cholesterol.⁴ After a month, researchers found that eating foods high in fiber helped lowered cholesterol just as well as taking medication.

What foods are high in fiber? In the study, people ate oats, barley, psyllium, okra, and eggplant. Other foods high in fiber include avocados, pears, squash, berries, legumes, nuts, and seeds.

Add these foods to your diet to control cholesterol, improve your health, and lower the risk for a heart attack or stroke. @

What Happens If You're Always Stressed Out? (continued from page 1)

Manage stress in healthy ways

If you are stressed out, take action to manage stress in healthy ways. Get regular exercise and 7-8 hours of sleep. Practice relaxing with yoga,

MORE

Best ways to manage stress
<http://tinyurl.com/ycxxodhd>

meditation, and deep breathing. Working with a counselor can help you change behaviors, develop healthy habits, and set goals to reduce stress, too. @

References

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3. Adam, E., et al. (2017). Diurnal cortisol slopes and mental and physical health outcomes: A systematic review and meta-analysis. *Psychoneuroendocrinology*, 83:25-41. doi: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.psyneuen.2017.05.018>
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Take the September Health Challenge!

Sit Less, Move More: Stand up, stretch, and move more this month.

Ask the Wellness Doctor:

This Dr. Joe Raphael answers the question:
What's the benefit of a morning routine?