

[IMAGE]

## Your Waist May Make the Difference

By Editorial Staff

If you're obsessed with body-mass index and worry being above what's considered "normal" for your height / weight will increase your health risks, you may want to focus on another variable that's proving to be even more significant: waist circumference (WC). While BMI can be skewed by muscle mass, among other things, waist circumference is an indication not only of "subcutaneous fat" (below the skin) but also of intra-abdominal fat (known as visceral fat). It's the latter type of fat that is most concerning, and research suggests waist circumference is more predictive of visceral fat than BMI.

Visceral fat is a problem because the fat is situated around the liver and other abdominal organs, and it's been found to be very metabolically active.

waist line - Copyright â Stock Photo / Register Mark The Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health states that visceral fat "releases fatty acids, inflammatory agents, and hormones that ultimately lead to higher LDL cholesterol, triglycerides, blood glucose, and blood pressure."

According to the American Heart Association's National Heart, Lung and Blood Institute, abdominal obesity is defined as waist circumference of 35 inches or more for women and 40 inches or more for men. There's a right and wrong way to measure WC, so be sure to consult with your doctor if you're worried your waist circumference may be becoming a problem.

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