

[IMAGE]

## Watch Your Waist During Menopause

By Editorial Staff

Monitoring your waistline is sound advice regardless of age since obesity is such a strong contributing factor to poor health, including type 2 diabetes, heart disease and some cancers. But it's especially important for women during menopause, suggests new research. Here's why.

Women who experience increasing accumulation of abdominal fat during menopause are more likely to develop heart disease – and the risk is independent of their weight. In other words, women who accumulate more belly fat during these years – even if they don't gain any weight – are at higher risk for cardiovascular problems than women with less belly fat (even women who may gain weight during this time, but not concentrated in the abdominal area).

waist line - Copyright â Stock Photo / Register Mark Published in the journal *Menopause*, the study assessed abdominal fat accumulation via waist circumference measurements performed during preventive health appointments. For every 20 percent increase in belly fat, carotid artery thickness increased by 2 percent. (The carotid artery transports blood from your heart to your brain; a narrowing of the artery could cause a blockage, leading to stroke.) This occurred independent of weight, body-mass index or other risk factors for cardiovascular disease.

The study also found that abdominal fat accumulation increases sharply within two years of a woman's last period; then more gradually thereafter. That means preventive measures to minimize belly fat accumulation during this stage of life is critical. Talk to your doctor for more information.

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