

[IMAGE]

Belly Fat: Bad for the Spine

By Editorial Staff

If you can't seem to shake your belly fat (no pun intended) and are experiencing back pain, or other pain and dysfunction potentially linked to spinal health, there's a reason: belly fat is bad for your spine. Let's take a look at what new research says about how belly fat exerts forces on the spine.

Researchers evaluated how belly fat weight (which correlates with waist circumference) affects spinal load, particularly whether – and if so, how much – increasing waist circumference impacts the spine, using a 3-D model. Among various ranges of waist circumference, they found that abdominal fat "induces spine stress in the lower thoracic spine and the upper lumbar spine"; in layman's terms, the middle to lower back.* The larger the waist circumference, the greater the forces exerted on the spine.

weight gain - Copyright © Stock Photo / Register Mark Reporting on study results in *Surgery Technology International*, the researchers emphasize that their findings may explain why people who are overweight or obese (particularly with excess weight concentrated in the abdominal area) often experience back pain. Their findings also suggest spine health may be an all-too-often overlooked benefit of maintaining a healthy weight. Your doctor can tell you more about how weight and other factors can influence spine health.

**The spine is divided into three primary regions: cervical, thoracic and lumbar. Cervical vertebrae are in the neck; thoracic in the mid-back; and lumbar in the lower back. The lumbar spine is generally considered the most vulnerable to injury, since it supports the most weight.*

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